



THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

VOL. II.

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THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

A *Nobel*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

BOOK I—FLOOD.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XIII.

NEXT day at the dinner hour, as he was returning from the mill to the house, he found Martha Rhodes leaning against the lane gate, as though awaiting him.

The girl had resolved on speaking to him about Annis, but it cost her such an effort, that nothing saving her anxiety for her cousin, and sense of responsibility for her welfare, would have induced her to undertake the task. She felt that much depended on the way in which she managed her part,

and she was fearful of being unequal to it. It was with no little agitation that she waited at the gate for Hugh; her heart beat very fast, and her breath came short. Hugh was glad of the opportunity of speaking to her, and securing her silence respecting what she had seen the evening before.

“Martha,” he said, coming up to her, “how do you do to-day?”

“Very nicely, thank you sir.”

“Are you not going home to your dinner?”

“Presently.”

“Are you waiting for any one?”

“Please, sir, I was waiting for you.”

“For me! well, do you know, I wanted to have a word with you myself. I dare say you were rather surprised to see me walking with your cousin Annis, so late last night.”

“I was very much surprised.”

“Of course you were.” Hugh began to fidget a little. Martha turned her dark, ex-

pressive eyes on him ; they seemed to him full of reproach. “ Well, you see, I had something particular to say to her. You know I—I had to do with bringing her and her mother into safety during the flood. Well, I had something respecting that about which to speak to her. Now I want to ask you not to gossip about having met us together, for if you do, you may do Annis a great deal of harm, and cause her a great deal of annoyance and pain.”

“ You may be very sure I’ll say nowt about it.”

“ Thank you. Of course it was an accident our being together, but it was one which, if maliciously taken advantage of, might occasion much distress. You understand me ?”

“ Ay.”

“ Thank you, Martha ; and now, good day !”

She held out her arm to bar the way.

“Nay, nay!” she said, hastily; “don’t go.”

“Have you something to say to me?”

“Ay; a deal. Wait a bit.”

She was gathering up her courage. Her noble face was full of passing lights and shadows, kindling and darkling in her eyes. She did not look at him, but turned towards the valley, resting her chin on her hand, and her elbow on the gate. The other arm she kept extended. Hugh waited a little while, and still she did not speak, so he said:

“Martha, what is it?”

She turned to him with an effort, and said, hurriedly:

“You must leave Annis alone. She is a poor simple bit o’ thing as onybody could twist round t’ little finger. She’s a’most too simple, and she thinks there’s no harm and danger where there’s most.”

“I will do her no injury, Martha.”

“Ah! thou thinks not; but don’t thou know o’ Nancy Eastwood and Bob Atkinson, lad? I would na’ have things go t’ same road wi’ our Annis for a’must onything.”

“You must not think that, Martha. You have no right to suspect evil, merely because you saw me walking with Annis.”

“But it’s not that alone,” she said, speaking fast; “thou knows thee’s told her that tha loves her, and——”

“Martha! what makes you say this?”

“I know it; never heed how. I cannot have thee do owt wrong to my poor little Annis. She’s a dear good lass, and thou’lt none find a better, choose how.”

“I am sure of that; but you really must not think evil of me.”

“I think this,” answered Martha, “that thou dostn’t know thy own sen where thou ’rt leading her to. Thou loves her,

maybe, and loves her dearly. But what then? Dost thou think thou can make her thy wife? Nay, lad, she wi'nt frame for that, and thou dost not think it. Thou'rt ta'en wi' her face and her pretty ways, and thou'rt goin' forard 'bout (without) thinking whither 't 'll lead thee. If thou see her and speak wi' her, and gain her love, that leads to nowt but broken hearts and sad actions. Nay, nay! leave her alone, it's better for the both o' you."

She paused, out of breath.

"Martha," said Hugh, earnestly, "I admire and respect you for speaking out. You have shown yourself a true friend to Annis, and a brave, right-minded girl."

"I want none o' your fine speeches," said Martha, sharply. "It's them fine speeches as has done t' job wi' our Annis. Nay! keep off me, and keep off her wi' fine words and civilities; we can do very well wi'out,

and mebbe be more heart-whole i' t' end. Eh! it's a shame to go and steal t' affections o' a poor little lass as knows no better, and mak' her fret as though she had t' wark (pain) i' t' heart."

"You must really listen to me," Hugh said. "I tell you, you need not entertain the least fear that I will conduct myself otherwise than honourably towards your cousin. Her character, her reputation, are sacred and dear, and neither shall suffer at my hand."

"Why! thee'st axed her to love thee!"

"What if I have?"

"Didst thou say owt to her about mak'ng her thy wife?"

"No, I did not."

"And why not, if thou meant honourably?"

"Because I was interrupted. Martha, it is very odd that you should know all about

what I said. Are you imagining it, or were you told it?"

"I got it all out, somehow," answered the girl; "I wasn't boune to rest till I knew all. I was too feared for Annis, I can tell thee."

"And you have constituted yourself her guardian?"

"I s'pose I have."

"And now, as her guardian, you have come to ask me my intentions?"

"Yes," answered the girl, brightening, "it's just so."

"Now, suppose I do not answer, nor acknowledge your right to assume this office: what then?"

She looked intently and sorrowfully at him; then she said, clasping her hands: "Why, then——Nay! I cannot tell. I'll ax t' Lord to take t' lassie into his own protection. I'll do all I can to save her

from you, and when I can do nowt, t' Lord 'll do t' rest."

She spoke confidently, with her face lighting up with earnestness and faith, and becoming beautiful through the strength of zeal which shone through her countenance, spiritualizing her features.

"Eh!" she continued; "it's not much I can do, my poor sen, but I'll not suffer her to fall into thy power wi'out a great fight for it—not wi' weapons of flesh, but wi' those o' prayer. And I reckon, if tha' does owt again that lassie, t' Lord 'll avenge his own on thee terribly."

Hugh caught her hand and shook it.

"My dear Martha," he said, "I desire no better guardian for Annis than you. I trust you. You are worthy of the office, and I acknowledge your right to demand an explanation of me. I do, indeed, love Annis: I told her the truth when I said I loved

her ; and, Martha, I promise you, no other woman shall be my wife. How to make her mine, I cannot tell now ; the way before me is dark. I am poor, and must wait till I have means of my own before I can ask her to share my lot with me ; but as soon as I am in a position to marry I will entreat Annis to be mine. Are you satisfied now ?”

“ I think so,” said Martha, examining his face, and endeavouring to read what was written there. She saw nothing save frankness and truth there. “ But, sir ! you must see it’s none weel for her to be seen wi’ thee. Folk will not believe that thou means right, and her character ’ll suffer ; and, if thou hopes to mak’ her thy wife, thou mun tak’ care that nobody has owt to fling i’ thy face o’ that score. Folks is over fond of casting muck.”

“ They are, indeed. Now, Martha, one

word. I should like to see Annis again, and tell her all my hopes and desires."

"I'll say nowt about that till I've thowt it over. Maybe I'll do thee that turn, but I'd better not promise. I think I may trust thee; thou looks honest, and thou speaks honest." Then, with a shake of her head: "But I fear thy civil speeches. Them as talks most grand does the worst, I've heard say; and David says, 'Their words are smoother than oil, and yet be they very swords.' I hope thou'rt none deceiving me."

"No, Martha, I am not. I think you may trust me. Have I not trusted you, and frankly told you all—told you enough to make me the laughing-stock and sport of the place, if you were to betray the confidence I have reposed in you? Can you not in return place confidence in me?"

"It is true," said the girl, musingly;

“you’ve told me a deal. Ay! I see what thou’rt driving at. It’s right. I see, thou’st been free and open wi’ me. Well, choose how, I’ll trust thee. There, lad! I ha’ said it. Please God, I shanna ha’ to rue it.”

“That you never shall.”

A moment after Hugh exclaimed, with a look of vexation :

“Bother! here comes my uncle. I wouldn’t have had him see me talking with you for something. Good-bye, Martha!” And he hurried off.

Mr. Arkwright walked leisurely up the hill to his house, hung up his hat, wiped his brow, sat down at the dinner-table, with an ominous frown on his face, and said :

“I thought so—Petticoats!”

He made no further remark during the rest of the early dinner, till a dessert of unripe apricots—in number five—was pro-

duced, home-grown, the only fruit which had escaped the marauding band-spinner's boy. Mrs. Arkwright looked at him, and shrugged her shoulders :

“ My dear Henry ! This is all—it is shocking ! ”

Whereat Mr. Arkwright sternly said :

“ If the apricots were the only shocking things, I should not mind so much ; but when Hugh—— ” He turned full upon him, and looked at him gloomily.

“ Well, sir ! ”

“ I'll tell you what, young sir. I give you timely notice, I'll not have you dangling after my girls. ”

“ My ivers ! ” exclaimed Gretchen ; “ what is dat ? ”

“ Never mind, ” said Mr. Arkwright ; “ it is no concern of yours, Gretchen. I am speaking to you, Hugh. Do you understand me ? ”

“Perfectly, sir.”

“I’ll not have you sawneying and slobbering about my lasses!”—the manufacturer was rather vigorous than refined in his expressions. “They are good enough little bodies, and I’ll not have you or any one else turning their heads, and making them pert and giddy.”

“You need have no fear of me.”

“Herr Je! what is de matter?” asked the little German woman.

“Nothing that concerns you,” answered her husband, shortly. “Hugh, what did you mean by talking to Martha Rhodes, one of the best and most well-conducted girls in the place, and turning her into a flirt?”

“I was doing nothing of the kind, sir,” said Hugh, with some exhibition of temper. “It is really very hard if I may not open my mouth to a young woman, without

becoming a victim to your odious insinuations.”

“I make no insinuations. I simply tell you that I’ll have no more of this. You understand me — no spoonying, no slobbering——”

“Sir, your expressions are exceedingly offensive.”

“Oh, Heinrich, what is dat?” from Gretchen.

“Never mind.”

(“But I will look in my Wörterbuch”),
sotto voce.

“Well, you know my opinion, Hugh; I beg you will act upon it. And now, take an apricot, and change the subject.”

CHAPTER XIV.

It not unfrequently happened that visitors at Sowden came to Mr. Arkwright's mill to see the processes of yarn and worsted-spinning. Those visitors were sometimes taken round by the overlooker ; but if they were acquaintances of the owner, or persons of distinction, by Mr. Arkwright himself, or his nephew.

Hugh had undergone the regular round several times, and was sufficiently posted up in the intricacies of the machinery and the processes gone through by the wool, to be a fair guide to the uninitiated. He could explain the mysteries of "willying,"

“slubbing,” “doubling,” and reeling, hanking, pressing, and making up, with tolerable accuracy and lucidity.

A day or two after the event recorded in the last chapter Hugh was commissioned by his uncle to take some ladies over the mill. Mr. Arkwright had business of importance, or pretended that he had, that he might escape the infliction of an hour with folk who had only come to while away idle time, and who would derive no possible benefit from the visit, taking no interest in what they saw. Mr. Arkwright would not have grudged half a day to a man of an inquiring mind, who exhibited intelligent inquiry, but he had no patience with sightseers, who came and went with no advantage to their minds. On the present occasion, he could not well commit this party to the overlooker, as it consisted of relations of the principal doctor in the

place, his own immediate friend. So he entrusted them to Hugh, observing to his nephew :

“ You are more a lady’s man than I am ; and, as this party consists exclusively of ladies, I think you will be in your element. I would not rob you of the pleasure on any consideration.”

“ I think, when they have seen the mill, I will bring them here for you to run them through the books.”

“ I will not have them here,” said Mr. Arkwright, sharply ; “ I can’t be pestered with a lot of tittle-tattling, empty-headed women. I am not of the age to appreciate it, but you are. I am satisfied you will immensely enjoy your morning.”

“ Really, uncle, I think you understand the machinery so much better than I do, and are able to give so much more lucid explanations of its operation, that I feel

I am taking an office on me which becomes you better."

"By the way, Hugh, I want you to keep your eyes open. There is an heiress in the party, a Miss Doldrums, a nice enough girl, with lots of the summum bonum. Her father made a fortune out of a patent smoke-jack, and when he died left it all to her. Now's your time to do the gallant and insinuating."

"She may keep her smoke-jack money to herself. I do not want it."

"Yes, you do, my boy; a little money is a glorious thing, and a great deal is glory itself. By Jove! I'd take you into partnership directly, if you could put a few thousands into the business."

"But I have no inclination to take the lady into partnership," answered Hugh, laughing; "what is she like? Has she red hair and a squint? does she limp, and is she freckled?"

“No such thing: she is a handsome, dashing girl. You might do worse, Hugh; indeed you might.”

“Shall I take them through everything?” asked Hugh.

“Oh, that is just as they fancy. Probably the usual round will suffice—drying, dyeing, wilying, spinning, reeling, packing. Take care that you keep their crinolines off the machinery, and don’t let them get fast in any of the bands.”

“I’ll do my best. But I must say, sir, you show more interest in these ladies than you do in me.”

“How so?”

“Why, you are so preciously eager to get me entangled in the worst bands of all, from which I could never break free—the matrimonial bands.”

Mr. Arkwright enjoyed a joke, especially if of a simple and punning description:

refined wit was quite beyond him. Hugh's sally was highly appreciated by him.

"Get along, you rascal," he said; "I see a flutter of parasols outside the window, awaiting you. Look out for Miss Doldrums, and lose your heart, if you can possibly manage it, and take her fortune and her strapping self in exchange."

"Thank you for nothing."

Hugh went out with the ladies. He found Mrs. Jumbold, in her black bonnet and grey shawl, with the end of her nose very red, and her curls very wiry, in charge of three ladies: Mrs. Doldrums, the relict of the smoke-jack patentee, who had issue, Laura, there present, in a blue gown and hat trimmed with yellow, a green parasol, and magenta gloves. The other ladies were Miss Thomson and Miss Mergatroyd, the former a relative of Mrs. Doldrums, the latter a school-friend of Laura's.

“I think,” said Mrs. Jumbold, in her harsh voice, pushing towards Hugh, “I think you have not had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of these ladies; let me introduce you.”

That ceremony having been gone through, Hugh proceeded down the yard in their company. Mrs. Jumbold fastened herself on him, and began confidentially to poke him under the fifth rib with the ferule of her parasol.

“Doldrums,” she said, in a half whisper, looking out of the corners of her eyes and shaking her ringlets, “you know the name?”

“I have that pleasure, now that you have favoured me with an introduction.”

“Good name,” said she, “very.”

She spoke abruptly, with little snapping sentences.

“Silver medal at ‘International,’ you know.”

"Indeed," Hugh observed, slyly, "I was unaware that medals had been awarded for names."

"Smoke-jacks!" She discharged the word as a pea from a boy's shooter.

"I am glad to learn it. Miss Mergatroyd, allow me to caution you against letting your shawl trail on the ground, the pavement is very dirty."

The young lady smiled, and took the necessary precautions to avoid the soiling of this article of vesture.

"It is not a shawl, Mr. Arkwright," she said, with a wriggle and jerk of the chin, intended to be childish and fascinating, "it is a pelisse."

"This way, Miss Doldrums; you are going towards the dye-house."

"I particularly wish to see the dye-house," said Miss Doldrums. "Do let me run in, I'll be out in a moment."

“We shall come to it in turn.”

“Oh, but I hate going in regular order, let me pop in and out where I like, I shall see so much more.”

“You may get into mischief.”

“I always am in mischief,” she said; “let me get into some frightful scrape. Do then ! let me tap one of the dye-vats, and waste ever such a lot ; or let me burst a boiler, or pull down a chimney, or something.”

“Nonsense, Laura,” said Miss Thomson, “keep with us, or you will get upset into some cauldron of boiling water, or chopped to bits among the wheels, and that would be dreadful.”

“But I must see everything. Promise me, Mr. Arkwright.”

“Yes, you shall see all that is to be seen.”

“I should so like——,” she paused, and looked up to the mill chimney.

“Well, my dear,” put in Mrs. Jumbold, “what would you like? I am sure, with your means, no wish need remain ungratified.”

“I should so like——”, then she turned sharp round at Hugh, and said: “Here, tell me, is it possible?”

“What, Miss Doldrums?”

“Could I possibly get up to the top of that chimney?”

“Good gracious!” exclaimed the doctor’s wife; “why, what an idea!”

“I should love it,” said the vehement young lady. “It is so tall, there would be such a view from the top, and it would seem so funny looking down. Mr. Arkwright, take me up it, and all the others shall remain below, and we will pelt them with oranges and nuts.”

“I am afraid you must do without the ascent. There is no means of climbing it,” Hugh observed.

“But isn’t there a ladder inside?”

“No, none.”

“But there is in church-steeple, and I have often been up, taking jackdaws’-nests.”

“This is not a church-steeple, you see.”

“No; but there is a ladder in deep wells.”

“Neither is this a well, exactly.”

“Well, no; but it would appear like one, if you were at the top and looked down the inside. I don’t see why they should have ladders in wells, and not in mill chimneys. Mr. Arkwright, don’t you think you could tie two or three ladders together, and put them up outside.”

“I am sure there are none long enough.”

“Well,” said the young lady, “come along, show us something else. I am disappointed, or you are cross.”

“I am certain, my dear,” put in Mrs. Jumbold, in her croaky voice, “that Mr.

Hugh would not be cross with any one, least of all with *you*." Then aside, to the young man, "I have it on good authority, she has about fifteen hundred a year. The smoke-jack did it. They were nothing before. Only in a small way, you understand. But Mr. D. made a hit. The hit was unusually successful. She will have more when her mother dies." This was loud enough to be heard by Mrs. Doldrums.

"Yes," said that personage, a very stout, wheezy woman, with grey hair, who walked slowly and like a compass, supposing a compass could walk ; her joints being stiff, each step necessitated a semi-revolution of her enormous body. "Yes, when I'm dead," said she, "Laura will have three hundred more. Three hundred a year is settled on me for life, after which it passes to Laura ; and, as I am sixty-five, the chances are that she will have many years' enjoyment of it.

I have got such a sweet corner of Sourby churchyard set apart for me, next to Mr. Doldrums. I had a very nice stone put up to him, or rather, over him. It was a walled grave, and there is a large slab on top. I bought enough room for myself and for Laura, and for her husband, always supposing she will have one, and there are some odd corners for her children, should any die young. I haven't provided for them as grows up, you know. I didn't see that there was any call for that. I was not going to be stint in anything, Mrs. Jumbold, you understand. I'm a large woman, and I shall take up a deal of room, so I've had an extra width of grave, and I paid for it. But, perhaps, 't won't be needed, for I may fall away a great deal in my last illness, especially if it be a long and painful one. I hope I've left margin. What do you think, Laura, is there margin enough?"

“What, mother?”

“Is there margin enough, think you? You see, it won’t do to be too tight, it’s a pity for an inch or two to be thrussen for room.” Mrs. Doldrums gave way to Yorkshireisms occasionally, not being a highly educated personage. She was an exceedingly matter-of-fact person, and had her hobby, which was forced on all her acquaintance. This hobby she was unfortunately given an opportunity of mounting on the present occasion, by the remark of Mrs. Jumbold on her daughter’s prospects in the event of her decease.

Mrs. Doldrums had been provided for years with a shroud and a coffin, or rather with several coffins, for as her body increased in size, she being “in her fattenings,” as she termed it, the coffins, one after another, became too narrow for her to lie easy in them, and a fresh one was ordered of the

undertaker, and she was re-measured for it. The old ones she kept. "They may come in useful some day," she said, and, indeed, one of them had served Mr. Doldrums for his last bed. When very intimate friends had a death in the family, the old lady was wont to send a polite message to say that if she could oblige them with one of her old coffins she should be happy, only they must send the measure of the corpse, and she would let them know if it would fit.

There was a story told of this good lady, that a year or two ago she had a nephew in a decline. The poor fellow was very reluctant to believe it, and when the Whitsuntide school feast took place in the parsonage garden, adjoining the cemetery, he was blithe as any of the children. Mrs. Doldrums, seeing him in a jubilant mood, caught him by the arm and drew him into the churchyard, and pointing to the tomb

of her husband, said, "Charlie, I've bought room enough to accommodate you very comfortably in there; you shall lie next to Mr. Doldrums, on the opposite side to where my coffin is to be, and so you'll have the side next the wall."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Miss Mergatroyd, "what a horrid smell!"

"It is the oil," said Hugh; "all the wool—indeed everything here—is saturated with oil. One soon gets accustomed to the smell. I do not mind it in the least, whereas the odour of indigo dye is to me sickening, and I shall never get used to it."

"My! what a din!" from Miss Doldrums, as they entered the long room, full of rattling wheels, whirling bobbins, flying bands, rotating cylinders, and little figures with smudged pinafores, darting about under the control of an elderly man in a white linen coat, very much discoloured with oil.

The ladies stood at the door, bewildered by the motion which pervaded every object on which their eyes rested, by the thrumming of the boards under their feet, and the discordant metallic clatter in their ears. When they spoke, they spoke loud to be heard.

The man in white jacket shouted.

At once a shoal of little girls scampered from some lurking-place behind a line of whirling bobbins, and rushed across the passage, down the centre, and dived out of sight behind some other piece of mechanism. As the ladies went down one side of the room and up the other, Hugh explained the processes which were going on to Mrs. Dol-drums, Miss Mergatroyd, and Miss Thomson.

“I have been over the place so often,” said Mrs. Jumbold, “that I know every inch, and all the ins and outs are quite familiar to me.”

Presently Hugh felt a poke in his ribs, and turning sharply round to find the cause, discovered the surgeon's lady attempting to attract his attention to Miss Doldrums by lunging at him with her parasol.

"Look at her," she said; "so rich, and so playful."

The young lady to whom Mrs. Jumbold alluded, was conversing with the overlooker in a familiar manner.

"Are you called Tom?"

"No, miss. My name's William Fanshaw."

"Oh, Will! Will, may I put my finger there? I wonder how it would feel? How fast it goes round. Do you think I might touch it?"

"Why, miss, if you want to have your finger taken off, you may. Look here. Hey! Emma Varley!" he called, and a girl of twelve trotted up. "Look here, miss! she put her finger where you want to put

yours, and it's gone." He caught the girl's hand and shewed it to the young lady.

"Oh, you poor little darling!" exclaimed Laura. "When did that happen? How dreadful. I wish I were Queen, and I'd stop children working in these mills, that I would."

"I don't fancy they'd thank'y over much for that," said the overlooker, smiling. "But you see, miss, every one as has to work for their living has to run some risks. There's sailors have to chance being drowned, and there's soldiers to being shot, and them as works in factories to be lamed. But you wouldn't put down all sailing and soldiering and manufacture, would you?"

"Come along, Emma," said the volatile girl; "I want to see what you are working at. Do tell me all about it. I can't listen to Mr. Hugh's long story, I'd rather hear

you ; and then you can shew me," and she ran after the little lassie to the row of bobbins where she was piecing.

"Look here !" said Laura, casting her eye round ; "break one of those threads, do ! I want to see what will happen."

"Please, miss !"

"Now, do, there's a dear child. I'll say I did it, if any one begins to scold."

Little Varley snapped a thread, and then stopped the bobbin.

"What are you doing there?" asked Hugh, coming up.

"Mischief," answered the young lady, with twinkling eyes. "Now get along, I'm not going to have you to explain things ; I have a little friend here who knows all about the wheels and crinkum crankums better than any one else. Emma, come along and tell me what that great joggling contrivance is for. Oh ! look, there's a great squirrel's

cage, I must see it!" and off she darted, holding Emma Varley by the arm, across the great room, towards the reeling place.

"Why! I thought there would be a squirrel inside," said Laura, in a tone of disappointment, when she came to the wooden circular frame on which the worsted is wound previous to being made into hanks.

"Emma! what is this for? Tell me."

The girl explained to the best of her ability.

"Did it hurt you much having your finger off?" asked Laura, suddenly adverting to another subject.

"Nay, miss, not over much. I didn't feel a'most no pain at all."

"And what did Mr. Arkwright do?"

"Eh! he were kind. He paid t' doctor's bill, and cam' to see me, and gav' me a present o' five pound. He put it i' t' saving bank for me. He's a grand master is

Arkwright. Art thou onyways akin to him?"

"No; what made you ask?"

"Nay! I cannot tell. Please, miss, I mun go back to my piecening."

"Well, go." Then suddenly coming upon Annis, she said, "Is your name Mary, or Susan, or Maggie, or what?"

"Annis."

"It's a funny name, but I like it. Annis! I think it's very pretty. Oh! here comes Mr. Hugh; I want to know whether you don't think Annis a very pretty name, sir?" asked Miss Doldrums, turning sharply upon him. Hugh became scarlet, and looked askance at Annis.

"You must not ask me," he replied; "I am not a judge of names."

"Annis," said Laura, "let me tie up one of those clues. How fast you move your fingers. Give me one of those bits of yellow

worsted. Stay! steady the squirrel cage. There! I've done it as well as any of yours. Do you not get tired of spinning that thing round all day long?"

"Oh, no, miss! I'm used to it."

"I never could get accustomed to such monotonous work, I'm sure. Good-bye, I am off. I want to see something else."

"Don't get entangled in the machinery!" called Hugh to her, but she did not hear him; the rush of the wheels, the clack of the bands, and the shivering of the windows, drowned his voice.

The reeling did not detain the other ladies long; they walked towards the door, as this was the last of the processes gone through in the great room. The packing was done elsewhere.

Before leaving, Hugh stepped back to Annis, and whispered to her:

"Dear little girl: I must have a word

with you. I have not said all I want. When can I speak to you?"

She looked at him timidly, and said nothing.

"Shall you be at liberty at twelve?"

She nodded slightly.

"I am not going home to dinner to-day," she said, falteringly. "Mrs. Rhodes has sent us (our) dinner here."

"Well. Will you come to Whinbury Wood at noon? I must finish what I have to say to you."

"May Martha come too?"

Hugh hesitated, and looked provoked.

"Very well—yes—bring her. But you I must see."

Then he ran after the ladies, and caught Miss Doldrums' hand away from a strap which was revolving rapidly, and which she wanted to try her strength upon. Mrs. Jumbold suddenly came up. Hugh started;

she had been behind him, and not with the other ladies.

The overlooker gazed after Laura as she left the long room, and said, grimly smiling :

“I never seed owt like her, she’s as wick as a scoprill,” by which he meant that she was as lively as a teetotum.

At twelve o’clock Hugh made his way to Whinbury Wood. It was a little broken patch of ground covered with rocks and trees, hardly deserving the name of a wood, not extending over more than some ten acres, the trees wide apart, the ground ferny and straggled over by blackberry brambles. It was a favourite resort of the girls in summer, when they did not go home to dinner ; they were fond of taking their tins and sitting on the rocks under the shadow of the oaks and beeches, to eat their frugal meal. A little footpath led to it from the

back of the mill, above the drying-ground for the dyed wool; the distance was nothing considerable—perhaps ten minutes' walk. There was another way to the place, through a gate opening out of the high road, some distance up the hill. Hugh went this way, so as not to attract observation. It was considerably longer; and, by the time he reached the wood, Martha and Annis were already there.

Martha had been rather startled when her cousin told her that Hugh had appointed them to meet him in the wood, and at first felt disposed to object, but afterwards she yielded, for she considered that it was best that Hugh and Annis should meet again, and come to an understanding together, and she was glad that it should take place in broad daylight and in her presence.

Hugh came towards them, his face glowing with pleasure.

“Annis, I am thankful that you have come ; Martha, it is very good of you. You will let me have a few words with your cousin, will you not, staid guardian that you are ?”

“Ay, sir, you may speak to her, I came for that purpose. But don’t be long about it, for I wouldn’t have onybody see you together for owt.”

“Martha, I shall not be long, but I cannot say what I have to say in the presence of a third—this time.”

The girl smiled, and walked away ; seated herself on a rock at a little distance, with her face towards the mill, and opening her tin, began her dinner.

“Annis,” said Hugh ; “I began to tell you how I loved you, but was interrupted, once before. Now I tell you the same tale again. I tell you that I love you deeply, intensely, truly, with my whole heart ; and now I want to know if there is some little

nook in your bosom in which the thought of me may be cherished with love."

The girl looked down, and trembled ; she could not answer.

"Dearest Annis," Hugh continued, "let me tell you what I offer you. I have no means and no home of my own ; I am poor myself, and I only ask you to be a poor man's wife. I cannot, however, demand you to be mine now. I see no way open as yet, all is uncertain before me, and I know not how I may get on in that world in which I have now only begun to struggle. But, believe me, if you will promise to be true to me, and will try to love me, I will fight my way on bravely and with good heart, and trust God to make the path clear, and open a road where now I see no way."

The little girl shook with agitation, and her lips were quite unable to form words.

"Annis," said Hugh, "put your hand in

mine. You shall say nothing. Here, if you are willing to look forward with me and wait in hopes, press my hand ; if you refuse me, let go."

He held the slender fingers in his. They were not withdrawn. Presently, very timidly, they were contracted on his, and at the same moment her full moist eyes looked him in the face.

He stooped and kissed her white brow.

" My own little love," he said, softly ; " so be it. We shall be one in heart. We may not meet often, but we shall trust one another, and cherish the love of one another as a precious jewel in our breasts. God knows how things may turn out ! I doubt not that if we are loyal to one another all will come right in the end. Give me one kiss."

She put up her bare arms and wound them round his neck, and he folded her to his heart.

“Annis!” cried Martha, suddenly; “come along lass.”

She dropped her arms, the tears were streaming down her glowing cheeks, tears of joy which welled up in her soul, like one of the fountains of living water of Paradise.

“Annis,” called Martha, anxiously; and turning hastily round, she made a sign to Hugh to be off.

Hugh’s sharp eyes all at once fell on a black poke bonnet, a grey shawl, a pointed nose, wiry ringlets and a pair of sharp eyes.

“I *am* astonished!” said a shrill voice.
“Well, indeed!”

CHAPTER XV.

Mrs. RHODES having sent their dinners down to her husband and daughter at the mill, had the coast clear for regaling Richard Grover. She knew that her husband would not consent to the man entering his door again, and therefore she took care to invite him when John Rhodes would not be at home. It was some way to the factory, and there was a long hill to ascend, wherefore it was Mrs. Rhodes' wont often to send the dinner to her family, unless it were of such a nature as to render it advisable that they should return to Kirkgate to partake of it.

Richard had been a fortnight or three weeks in Sowden, where his ministrations

had proved exceedingly acceptable, but the society being financially incapable of accepting a prolongation of his favour, had passed him on to the adjoining parish, where he was conducting a similar round of religious exercises to that he had carried on in Sowden.

He did not forget his old friends in the latter place, but looked up one or two of those whom he held in highest favour, and among these was Mrs. Rhodes.

The little awkwardness of the cursing and swearing, foul language and assault on Martha, was put aside and forgotten by him and the elect lady.

“You see th’ owd chap war agait of bringing me agin into bondage. He thowt he’d gotten me then. We’re all tried mortal bad. Paul stood Peter to th’ face, and I warn’t going to stand your lass’s imperence.”

So he explained away the affair, and Mrs.

Rhodes was quite disposed to accept the explanation, such as it was, in a friendly spirit.

“Thou knows,” said the preacher, “what we *do* ain’t nothing. Glory be! We’re justified by faith alone.”

Richard Grover was a scoundrel and a hypocrite.

For many years of his life he had been a thorough-paced scoundrel, and he was a hypocrite in addition. Shortly after his release from jail he had attended a Revival in a dissenting chapel. He had been awakened to a consciousness of his state, and had felt sincere, but transient, compunction; sufficient, however, to make him cry out, in the midst of the assembly, for mercy.

To those who have never attended a Revival, and are therefore unaware of its character, a brief sketch of the proceedings may be of interest. It is preceded by a sermon, interspersed with hymns and extempore

prayers, often of an unexceptional character, and the sermon itself of singular vigour and considerable eloquence, delivered with tremendous energy and action. At the conclusion of the discourse, those who would leave the chapel are prevented. If a person, especially a female, is seen to open a pew-door, the preacher, or one of his satellites, rushes up, and thrusts, or drags the person up the chapel. The whole place rings with shrieks and groans. The noise becomes deafening ; every one who considers himself or herself in a converted state, cries out to the Almighty vociferously ; in the mean time the patient is forced on to a cushion, about which men stand crying and exhorting, and calling on the Spirit to descend. Pray, pray, pray ! is roared into the frightened person's ears, whilst the waving hands, the passes, and the fixed eyes of the operators, produce a mesmeric condition in which consciousness is

suspended, and the individual performed on does what he is bidden without feeling power to resist, or retaining afterwards a reminiscence of what has taken place. If those who have been converted at a Revival are questioned, in many cases it will be found that what transpired has been completely forgotten, and that the whole has seemed like a frightful dream. Others become hysterical, and scream convulsively. Their state is secure, the agonized shrieks are tokens of the operation of Divine grace. Sometimes the patient attempts to run away, and is pursued by the elect; the doors are shut, and he is hunted down with demoniacal howls. At a camp-meeting he is raced round the field, whilst the preacher calls to the pursuers to have him fast and not let the devil run away with him.

It happens often that the excited condition of the whole congregation, the noise, the

lights, the heat, the magnetic influence, affect a witness who is not of the elect, and he lifts his voice in the chorus of yells. He is instantly pounced upon, dragged forward, thrown on his knees before those assembled, and made to pray aloud ; any words, however few and incoherent, are accepted as tokens of a regenerate heart, and the congregation bursts forth in shouts of Glory ! Glory ! Hallelujah ! The Lord be praised !

It was in this manner that Richard Grover was converted ; and having once been regenerated, he was forced on to narrating his experiences, conducting prayer, and preaching.

He was undoubtedly in earnest at first. Of the fundamental truths of Christianity he knew nothing, except that there was a flaming hell, a glorious heaven, and that by faith only the first was escaped and the second secured. Richard found that his rant proved attractive ; the owners of the chapel dis-

covered that he drew ; he continued to declaim, and to his delight found, not only that it was gratifying to his vanity, but filling to his pocket. The sermons he preached were not sermons, but narrations of his own diabolical past history, the horrors of which, the wickedness of which, was immensely interesting. The revolting tale was interspersed with exclamations of praise to God for having saved and justified him, and laudation of the effects of conversion. After a while Richard found that one congregation became tired of hearing the same narrative over and over again, and so he took to wandering from place to place, repeating the story, occasionally enlarging beyond the truth on the loathsome particulars, and conducting revival meetings. The first glow of enthusiasm soon wore off, the first sincerity died away, but the preacher was still required to exhibit the appearance of sincerity and

enthusiasm ; consequently he was forced to simulate what ceased to exist. This became habitual, and he was hardened into an hypocrite. The old vile propensities of his brutal nature regained their ascendancy, but had to be concealed. It is a terrible fact, but the veil beneath which he hid them was religion.

Such is the history of one, but it is also that of the many.

The result of the proceedings of these men is that the connexion existing between religion and morality is being steadily broken down among the lower orders, and that the less gullible, and less excitable, are filled with a disgust against religion in any form.

In the West Riding the principal religious communities are the Church, the Wesleyan body, the Baptists, and the Ranters, or Primitive Methodists. The Wesleyan society, once so powerful, is losing its ground. It fails to make proselytes, it

numbers the old and middle-aged, respectable, well conducted, and solemnly pious artizans and shopkeepers, and principally is supported by mill-owners, who like its respectability, and who, having been brought up dissenters, choose a solemn form there of which will flatter them, and not exact of them much scrupulosity as to their trade conscience. But Wesleyanism presents no attractions to the young, and children who have been marched twice a day, morning and afternoon, to the Methodist chapel, will be found in the evening at Church or Ranter meeting-house, and at either place they acquire a taste for something very different from the dull and ponderous services of their chapel.

The Baptists are patched about ; certain districts are entirely free from them, and there Independents are to be found. In some places they are very powerful, and are an energetic and an influential body. But

the Primitive Methodists carry with them most of the lower class. The manner in which they keep up a succession of excitements has already been sketched. The Ranters are more in earnest and more real than the Wesleyans. They have no fixed principles; anything that has go in it is adopted by them; the last roystering popular song is parodied, and its tune adopted as a hymn melody. For instance, before service on Sunday, a band of men will be seen marching in procession down the street singing at the top of their voices such a song as Richard Grover's "We are coming," or the following arrangement of Russell's favourite song:

"Cheer, saints, cheer! we're bound for peaceful Zion;
 Cheer, saints, cheer! for that free and happy land!
 Cheer, saints, cheer! we'll Israel's God rely on,
 We'll be led by the power of his right hand.
 "Cheer, saints, cheer," &c.

But there is a lower depth of Yorkshire

religionism still, and that is the Glory Band—a band of maniacs performing the most frenzied antics, seizing in the street on any casual passer-by, and forcing him to cry out that he is saved, waking the sleepers at night by their discordant howls.

The great mass of the intelligent men in our manufacturing districts are thoroughly dissatisfied with dissent. They have seen through its hollowness, and they are becoming daily more impressed with the hypocrisy of its professors, and the majority are falling into a condition of disbelief and contempt for all forms of worship and professions of faith.

If the Church did not present such a lamentable picture of a house divided against itself; if it were better manned than it unfortunately is, in the centres of mental and bodily activity; if it displayed its energy, instead of showing inertness, and, above all,

if it kept clear of HUMBUG, it is scarcely possible to doubt that the great body of noble, clear-headed, truthful, vigorous-minded men which form the muscle of England in the North, are ready at once to submit as children to a mother, thankful to escape from the cant and profanation of all that is holy which abounds in other quarters.

Religion is a powerful force everywhere, especially among the lower classes. This sketch would be incomplete without a picture of what meets one at every turn among those whose manners and habits we are describing. The drawing of Richard Grover may have startled, but it is by no means overdrawn; and if revolting, it is yet hatefully real.

“I think I could sup a drop more ale, lass,” said the man-monkey, extending his empty mug. “Eating mak’s a chap dry, thae knows.”

“ You shall have it and welcome, Richard,” answered Mrs. Rhodes.

“ I say, owd lass ! I want a word wi’ thee. Th’ Lord’s work were agait grandly t’ other neet, if that blasted wench hadn’t come and sassed th’ gin and water i’ my face.”

“ She’s a bad un !” remarked Martha’s mother. “ Bad she ever were, and no mistake.”

“ Whoo’l come to no good end, I reckon,” said the man-monkey. “ Whoo’l be cast i’ th’ lake o’ burning brimstone an’ vitriol, wi’ t’ devils pokin’ her about wi’ red-hot irons. I’m very sewer o’ that, if she gangs th’ same road all her life through.”

“ I s’pose she will.”

“ And yond other gradely lass. Eh ! but she wor a glorious vessel for grace, an’ she knowed it.”

“ Who dost thae mean, our Rachel ?”

“Nay, t’other little lass o’ thine wi’ great shinin’ een.”

“Eh! thou means Annis. She’s none of ours.”

“I’d ha’ been th’ makin’ of her, an’ thy dowter Martha hadn’t hindered me, wi’ her cuss’d interfrance.”

“I reckon thou would. She’s a tidy lass, but she’s none converted, thou knows. She’s i’ th’ flesh still; she’s not gotten set at liberty yet.”

“Eh! but whoo mun be.”

“I’d be fair glad sho wor, but I don’t see how I can fashion it. Thou sees, sho’s set on Church wi’ our Martha, an’ I reckon there’ll be no breaking ’em off. Them’s ever together, and thou can not get one apart from t’ other; and Martha’ll set her again t’ truth strongly, and they’ll be as stiff as owt.”

“I very near did th’ job t’other neet,”

said Richard; “an I’d had another fi’ minutes I could ha’ settled th’ whole bag o’ tricks. It wor a pity, it wor.”

“Thour’t right there, Richard.”

“Ay, I know varry weel I could ha’ done it, an I had time; I felt th’ inspiration comin’ fast; I felt it i’ my finger ends, and flashin’ frae my een, an’ whoo wor goin’ fair dazed, and that’s a’most ever th’ sign that th’ works begone. I were tewing hard, an’ then thy dowter set all to nowt. Eh! but it’s sad to ha’ th’ Lord’s work marred and brought to nowt by a ower forrard lass as thy Martha. I seemen inclined for to ha’ another try.”

“I wish thou could, Richard, I do upon my soul.”

“Dost thae think thae could get it i’ tew this road?” asked the man-monkey. “Dost thae fancy thae could get thy John away some time, and thy Martha too, and let me

ha' a try again? I should like to convert her, that I should."

Mrs. Rhodes thought a while, and after having poked the fire, and looked in the oven, and shaken her head, she answered :

"Nay, I don't think it's possible; an' my John were to find thee here, he'd use me shameful. Eh! deary! the names he'd call me, and he'd take strap to me, mebbe."

"Now, dost thae fancy thae could send yond little lass some evening after th' miln looses to a fair lonesome spot, an' thy John and Martha know nowt about it? Then I could meet her there, thae sees."

Mrs. Rhodes took a brass candlestick and began to rub it bright, whilst revolving in her mind the feasibility of the suggestion.

"Happen I might," she replied, at last.

"Eh! that's right. Glory be! And wheer to wilt thae send her?"

“Dost thae know t’ lane doun to t’ sand-pit? They call it Sandy-pit Lane.”

“Out by Askroyd?”

“Ay.”

“I knows it middlin’ weel.”

“I’ll send her there an errand to-neet.”

“Nay, lass, not to-neet; I’ve a sermon at Askroyd Chapel.”

“Then to-morrow, that’s Wednesday.”

“Nay, I’ve a lect’r on th’ unmasking o’ th’ Confessional at Gordown.”

“When shall I say?”

“Put it at back eend; say Friday. I’ll be i’ th’ lane o’ Friday next—about what time?”

“I cannot say to th’ minute. Happen I say eight o’clock.”

“Thae’ll be varry sewer not to forget.”

“Nay! I’ll none forget; thae mun reckon on me, Richard.”

“Now gie me another sup o’ ale, and I’ll be makin’ tracks.”

She at once poured him out the beer, and he finished his meal. After a little further talk, he rose, and took his hat.

“I thank thee kindly for coming,” said Mrs. Rhodes.

“Now,” the man-monkey said, “thae’ll not forget Friday neet at eight o’clock !”

CHAPTER XVI.

ALAS for Hugh! Mrs. Jumbold had overheard him appoint Annis to meet him in Whinbury Copse, and had taken care to be present. She had seen her guests home, and had then sallied forth full of eagerness to find out what was meant by the assignation.

In the long room of the mill the noise had been too great for her to hear much, but she had distinctly caught Hugh's words—"Will you come to Whinbury Wood at noon? I must finish what I had to say to you." It was enough to excite the lady's curiosity to fever pitch, and she had been on thorns till twelve o'clock struck, and she was able to

escape from her visitors, and make her way to the trysting wood. There she appeared suddenly and unexpectedly, to see Mr. Arkwright, junior, with a little factory girl clinging to him, and he bending over her and kissing her.

“Upon my word!” said the lady, “who would have thought it? Ha! good-morning again, Mr. Hugh. I have surprised you, I see. Dear me! you have taken my breath away. I didn’t think it of you. Well, we live in a sad world—a world of wickedness! Of course, Mr. Hugh, your uncle knows of this, and, of course, you have informed your aunt.”

“Mrs. Jumbold,” said Hugh, angrily, “your conduct is monstrous. What right have you to follow me, and pry into my conduct, in this outrageous manner?”

“I have a right to take a little walk in the woods, I suppose,” said the lady, tossing

her nose, and sending her ringlets flying about her face: "I am fond of privacy, and I find this a retired place, Mr. Hugh."

"Annis," the young man said, sorrowfully, to the little girl, "go away, my pet; I have nothing more to say to you now."

"Annis," said Mrs. Jumbold, "the daughter of the woman who died after the flood! I know. Jumbold attended Mrs. Greenwell. How long have you been carrying on your intrigue, I should wish to know?"

"Then you may wish," answered Hugh, sharply. "I shall answer none of your questions, for I do not acknowledge your right to put them. I see popular report is not wrong in the character it assigns to you."

"Pray what character does it assign to me?"

"Ask others." Hugh was boiling with indignation at the mean inquisitiveness of

this social wasp, and his passion overcame his natural politeness. "It is no very savoury character, I can tell you."

"You are exceedingly rude," said Mrs. Jumbold.

"I am exceedingly incensed," retorted Hugh.

"Of course, you know that I shall feel it my duty to report to your relatives the scandalous scene I have had the misfortune to witness. I should be lacking in my obligations to those who have always been objects of my liveliest respect were I to fail in so doing."

"You are perfectly at liberty to blacken my character to the uttermost," answered Hugh, fiercely. "Go along with you to the town, and spend the rest of the day in rushing from house to house retailing slander, and rejoicing in your hateful business. I cannot hinder you; no mortal can. A

poisonous tongue will spit its deadly venom everywhere."

And he strode away from her.

"Dear, dear!" gasped the lady; "this is awful. What a vicious young man!"

Hugh was silent and abstracted at dinner. He knew that Mrs. Jumbold would make the worst of what she had seen, and that it would not be long before the story reached his uncle's ears.

He determined that he would speak to Mr. Arkwright first; but when he came to be face to face with him, his courage failed. The manufacturer rattled away with some story, and then chaffed his wife, and sent her to her dictionary in a state of bewilderment, so that Hugh found, or thought he found, no opportunity for broaching the subject. He then resolved to defer his announcement till they walked together to the mill; but when the time for returning to his books arrived,

he ascertained that Mr. Arkwright would not be at the factory, but was going to drive to a neighbouring town on business.

“Well,” thought Hugh, “I will tell him about it in the evening; he cannot well hear the gossip till to-morrow, unless that detestable woman comes here this afternoon, and poisons my aunt’s mind.”

Mrs. Jumbold did call on Mrs. Arkwright that afternoon. There was a radiance in her face as she came in and sat down, an *empressment* in her greeting of the little German lady, and a cheerfulness of manner which made Mrs. Arkwright exclaim :

“Ah, now, this is lovely! you are so well and so spirituous this after-midday. Are you not, meine liebe? I am quite sure, you are splendid.”

“I am very well, thank you,” answered Mrs. Jumbold, with a peculiar and expressive smirk on her face. “I think I never

enjoyed better health, but generally, you know, I am a poor sufferer."

"So! I am sorry. You have pain dreadful; where then?"

"In my liver. It is to liver I am a martyr. I have had to take a deal of calomel to keep my liver in control. I have been salivated frequently. But you know, Mrs. Arkwright, we can't always order things as we best like them, can we?"

"Oh, no," answered the little woman, vainly endeavouring to attach an idea to the words calomel and salivate, and only dimly guessing what was signified by liver. "Wait—I have a capital thing for sick in all bones; it is nice to rub in with a stück flanell. Shall I fetch it?"

"No!" entreated the doctor's wife, "I implore you not. I said I was very well now, but that I am often ill. Not now, you understand."

“Richtig! I understand.”

“And are you pretty middling, my dear?”
asked Mrs. Jumbold.

“What you say?”

“Are you well?”

“Oh, very well, thank you. How are the young ladies?”

“We have all been over the mill this morning; your nephew Hugh was so civil; he took care to explain everything to us so nicely, and, I am sure, my companions were most gratified. I have been through the place so often, you know, that I understand all about it; but Miss Doldrums and Miss Mergatroyd were quite new to anything of the kind. The smoke-jack trade, you know, is very different—more lucrative, you see.”

“Yes, I see.”

“The late Mr. Doldrums rose from a mere nothing. He chanced on an invention

which took with the public, so he made a great fortune. But"—and she lowered her voice—"I have heard say that the invention was not his, but that of a workman in his employ, and that Mr. Doldrums took advantage of it, and got a patent, and so secured the credit and the profit; but, you know, I can't say it was so, only people talk, you understand."

"Oh, yes, they do, ver-much."

"However, he is dead; and, whilst on that subject, I cannot help alluding to the extraordinary way in which Mrs. Doldrums thrusts her contrivance for her own funeral upon one at all times. It is an absorbing idea with her: and, you will allow, it is an exceedingly displeasing one. She is fond of introducing it at meal-time, especially when there is cold meat on the table. I think she might have better taste."

"Ach! but I think the meat cold is so

nice, with sour kraut, and I just chop up a little egg, and put it about of it; and, indeed, es ist mir sehr ang-enehm."

"There's no wonder she's fat," pursued Mrs. Jumbold, "considering the amount of bottled stout she takes. But, then, she can pay for it, or, if she can't, her daughter can. You'd hardly believe, my dear, the quantity she drank at lunch to-day. Jumbold helped her twice to porter, and she had some shandigaff too, and then she took claret and sherry like a fish, and after all asked for some spirits."

"And was she tossicated?"

"No, not that; cheerful—very cheerful. I observed her colour deepen, and her eye glisten, and she talked rather boisterously about how she had buried Mr. Doldrums handsomely, with plenty of mutes, and a nice hearse and plumes, and got him a roomy walled vault, and so on."

“Where, now—in her house?”

“No,” answered Mrs. Jumbold, “in the churchyard.”

Mrs. Arkwright looked somewhat perplexed; at last she inquired:

“Is he not dead, then?”

“Yes; he died some time ago.”

“Then, why wrong to have him put in the grave?”

The doctor’s wife gave up the subject in despair; the little German woman could not follow her. So she led off on another topic:

“I dare say you wonder to see me to-day?”

“But, no.”

“I called only on Saturday, and here I am again.”

“The more of the merrier, as Henry says. I am heartily glad to see you ever.”

“Thank you; you are exceedingly kind.

But I would not have inflicted myself on you to-day, but that I felt it right to tender my best thanks for your nephew's civility to us, in showing us round the mill; and, I am sure, we must have taken up a great deal of his valuable time."

"Oh, no; he is delighted."

"And, then, I wished—ahem! I wished to say—you must excuse me, my dear friend; I am in hopes you will."

"You are not going yet; no—stay!"

"No; I have something I feel it incumbent on me to mention, though, I am sure, it will cause you an infinity of pain."

"Oh, but I like Mr. Furness ver-much."

Mrs. Jumbold did not trace the connection between the remark of Mrs. Arkwright and her own preliminary observation. The link was the word, incumbent, which the German lady did understand, having looked it out in her dictionary the day before, and,

hearing it used now, she guessed the relation borne by the rest of the sentence to it.

“It is about Hugh I want to speak,” said the doctor’s wife, very loud and harshly, as though she were talking to a deaf person, and hoped to make her comprehend by increasing the volume of tone in her voice.

Mrs. Arkwright nodded, and said :

“He is a nice fellow.”

Then Mrs. Jumbold sighed, and looked commiseratingly at her hostess.

“I am afraid I shall distress you,”—leaning forward.

“Oh no, indeed,” said Gretchen, promptly.

“Do you know, I overheard Mr. Hugh speaking to one of the mill-girls.”

“To be sure ; he does that very often.”

“And he made an appointment with her ;” then Mrs. Jumbold fell back, and stared glassily at the lady of the house.

“Freilich !” exclaimed Gretchen, compla-

cently, not understanding in the least what an appointment signified.

“In Whinbury Copse.”

Mrs. Arkwright nodded.

“Do you understand?” asked the visitor. “Mr. Hugh told one of the factory girls to be with him in the Wood.” She spoke distinctly and slowly.

“You say true!” Mrs. Arkwright looked a little surprised.

“And,” continued the doctor’s wife, in her harsh tones, “I saw them meet.”

“That was well,” said the little woman.

“I actually saw your nephew”—here Mrs. Jumbold assumed an air of solemnity and mystery. She thrust forth her parasol and poked Mrs. Arkwright in the chest, nodded, winked, coughed, looked round the room, sighed—then shot her head and lips forward close to the other’s ear, and said, in a loud, hoarse whisper :

“ Kissed her !”

“ In my country every one do kiss,” said Mrs. Arkwright, with composure.

“ Smacked !”

Mrs. Arkwright smiled.

“ I must get my Wörterbuch ; excuse me !” and she ran in search of her book. On her return she found Mrs. Jumbold, stern, upright, and presenting an exceedingly forbidding appearance.

“ Now,” said Mrs. Arkwright, opening the dictionary on her knees, “ I am ready. Go on, Geschwind !”

“ I saw them kissing—yes, kissing,” continued the visitor. “ Horrible. And it was that Annis Greenwell, whose mother was nursed and died here. The base ingratitude of the thing disgusted me, apart from her shamelessness.”

“ Ah ! Annis, the dear little lassie ! She

is so nice, so zärtlich, so bescheiden!—so very gentle and modest.

“What, modest—meeting your nephew and kissing him!”

“Ach!” said Mrs. Arkwright, shrugging her shoulders, “I do not understand English ways, but I think her very nice.”

“I think both she and Mr. Hugh exceedingly wicked.”

“No, no,” exclaimed the little woman; “Hugh is a good fellow. Annis is a ver-good girl.”

“Do you call it good, meeting in a dark wood and kissing?” The wood, by the way, was not dark, for the trees were scattered.

“It is all right. I know Hugh is a good fellow. I will hear not bad of him.”

Mrs. Jumbold stared at her, elevated her eyebrows, and compressed her lips.

“Am I to understand, mam,” she said, in

a freezing tone, "that hugging and kissing are, in your eyes, morally right?"

"How you spell it?"

"Spell what?"

"H—hugging?"

"Really, Mrs. Arkwright, I cannot stay to inform you. I am amazed. Positively, I am flabbergasted——"

"Oh, stay!" and the little lady plunged into her dictionary.

"I am aghast at your insensibility to the outrageous immorality of your nephew. Do you think, mam, that one who thus flies in the face of all propriety is to be received into our society as fit to mingle with those who have at least some respect for the decencies of life!—is one who chooses to associate with the very tag-rag and bob-tail of——"

"Oh, stay!" pleaded Mrs. Arkwright, piteously, "I have not got that other word yet."

“Do you think that one who lowers himself to base amours is to be suffered to approach our daughters?” By the way, Mrs. Jumbold had none, and there was no immediate prospect of an arrival; the idea of daughters was, therefore, figurative and poetical. “No! certainly not. And, I must say, that I am shocked and pained to find that you, mam, whom I had regarded as a friend, should suffer yourself to so lose all sense of your position as to connive at the moral degradation of your nephew.”

“It is not in the Wörterbuch,” said Mrs. Arkwright, suddenly looking up, with an air of triumph.

“What is not?” asked Mrs. Jumbold, sharply.

“Flabbergast. Now, that other word.”

The doctor’s wife made a formal bow, and retreated towards the door.

“Do stay!” exclaimed the German lady;

"I will give you some nice grapes. They are in the Gewächshaus."

"Certainly not," answered Mrs. Jumbold, sailing out of the room.

"It began with one R," murmured Mrs. Arkwright.

Before evening, the story of Hugh's meeting with Annis in Whinbury Copse was public property.

Mrs. Jumbold spent the rest of the afternoon, as Hugh had anticipated, in circulating the tale, with additions of her own, not the least considerable of which was this: "And, strange to say, Mrs. Arkwright is at the bottom of it all!" Every one to whom this was told by the doctor's wife became a fresh centre from which the scandal could spread, and, as a story never loses in the telling, it became vastly transformed before it had passed through many hands.

Poor Hugh, as he sat over his books, knew what was going on in Sowden. When the whistle sounded for work to cease, he found by the significant glances of those he encountered, that the story had already reached the mill.

His heart almost failed at the prospect before him. He knew there would ensue weeks, and perhaps months, of misery—for it is miserable to an honourable man to have mean and cowardly actions attributed to him, and it is miserable to a modest man to know that he is in the mouths of every one, to be commented on and criticised.

He had brought it all upon himself by giving way to an attachment which must only become subject of gossip. He said to himself: "I ought not to have spoken, I might have kept my secret in my breast till time had passed, and I had an opportunity of seeing my way clearly. I was too pre-

cipitate ; would that I had been more patient, and had had more self-control !”

But then he made answer to himself : “ I could not but speak, I should have gone mad without ; my declaration has relieved my soul inexpressibly. Now I must bear the storm for Annis’s sake.”

But for her he would have been tempted—against his own convictions—to hide his head somewhere. This was a temptation, and he knew it to be such. No ! he would stand to his post, and face all that Sowden had to say, with frank assurance that what he had begun he would go through with, and show to all that he was not ashamed of what he had done.

Hugh had never before been brought face to face with the world. He had fallen into the eddies of a maelstrom ; and he had nothing to clasp, to stay him up. To descend a maelstrom, and come up alive, we must judiciously

select the object to which we cling. A boat goes down into the abyss keel upwards, and comes up battered and crushed, without him who held to it; a beam of wood fares no better. Drowning men catch at straws, but straws are obviously incapable of sustaining their weight on a placid sea, much less are they of avail in the vortex of the maelstrom. A hencoop has been recommended by some parties; Edgar Atkin Poe prefers an empty cask. As a general rule, the more light, hollow, and valueless the article, the safer it is to hold to. Anything solid and sound is sure to be sucked down, and crushed, but straws, feathers, hencoops, float. Hugh did grasp something—his faith in Annis, true, and strong, and firm, and good; that was certain to be engulfed by the maelstrom.

Eminent geographers assure me that the maelstrom does not exist except in the imagination of romancers.

Don't tell me that! I know it whirls with increasing fury every day, sucking into its hideous throat men, and women, and children. I hear its mutterings, I am in it myself, my head is spinning, my feet have no footing, my arms are extended to cling to whatever at the moment promises to stay me up.

I see the carcasses of the dead disgorged; and fair vessels, which went down with flags flying and sails spread, I see come up, mast and keel all shattered and crushed, out of the depths of that deadly grave of hopes, and lives, and fortunes, whilst the hencoops and empty casks swim uninjured.

Don't tell me that because now all is smooth and calm on the surface, there are no currents below. I hear their mumbling, deep and suppressed, swelling till they burst into voices like those of the daughters of the horse-leech, crying, "Give, give, give!" Give

lives, give reputations, give hopes, that we may mangle and destroy them !”

There is a smooth surface to tempt yon lighthearted boy to bathe in the treacherous waters—to allure yon tender maid to loose her skiff from the shore and glide over it—to induce yon calculating fisher to cast his net in it. But the current is working as a churn beneath, and the swimmer feels himself caught and sucked downwards, and the maiden finds her skiff drawn further from the shore, and the fisher is conscious of a strain upon his net, like a strong hand in the deep dragging it below, and he clinging to the net will go down with it. Alas ! poor lad ! we shall see thy shattered frame cast up with all life beaten out of it. We shall see thee, poor girl ! broken on the rocks below, and flung ashore, mangled out of all semblance of thy former self. We shall see thee, too, hapless

fisher ! strangled in the coils of thine own net.

Don't tell me there is no maelstrom !

“Es wallet und siedet und brausst und zischt,
Wie wenn Wasser und Feuer sich mengt,
Bis zum Himmel spritzt der dampfende Gischt,
Und Fluth auf Fluth sich ohn' Ende drängt.
Und will sich nimmer erschöpfen und leeren,
Als wolle das Meer noch ein Meer gebären.”

The hermit on his rock views this, and rings his warning bell, and the novelist points out the dangers, too, and then plunges into the gulf himself.

Don't tell me there is no maelstrom, when I see kings casting into it their crowns, and men their fortunes, and women their honour ; when I see fathers hurl down it their sons, and mothers their daughters, and husbands their wives. Good God ! No maelstrom ! Maelstrom is the supreme Moloch of the universe, to whom all nations and kindreds worship, and do sacrifice of their

best and dearest, of themselves, and their all.

No maelstrom ! when the diver comes up from the deep, with haggard eyes and sunken cheeks, to say that there *is* a maelstrom, and that he has been down it, and has seen the ghastly sights below, which are hidden beneath a glittering surface—the dragon, the shark, the snake, the sepia stretching its horrible arms, the shapeless hammer, the loathsome dogfish.

They who say there is no maelstrom dream. I have tasted of its brine, I have battled with its waves, I have had a glimpse of the horrors in its womb, and I know, in verity, that there is a maelstrom.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN the wave broke above the head of Annis, she extended her hand to Martha, and Martha sustained her.

As they left the mill, a party of girls attacked Annis with exclamations of—

“Eh, lass! thou’rt deep!”

“Whoever would ha’ thowt it o’ thee!”

“How could thou fashion to go trailin’ after thy betters!”

“Eh! I thowt, wi’ all thy still ways, thou wor ower deep.”

“I’se sorry thou’rt a bad un.”

Annis shrank from them in a blanched, quivering state, with her great eyes distended

with terror, unable to say a word to protect herself.

“Ya mun kep off, every one o’ you,” said Martha Rhodes, looking round on the group. “I tell thee, Hannah, she’s no more a bad un than thee. She’s as good and modest as any one o’ ye all, and you’ve none occasion to be casting stones at her afore she’s down.”

“She’ll come to no good, lass,” said the girl Hannah. “Thou knows Nancy Eastwood; weel, it’s a bad road to be taking after her.”

“She’s not taking after her,” answered Martha; “if Hugh Arkwright chooses to ax our Annis to be his wife, it’s just nowt to thee. He mun please hissen, and happen he might do wor.”

“Eh! dost thou think they’ll be wed?” said Hannah, derisively. “That’ll never be. He talks about it, but he doesn’t mean it.”

“That thou’st no call to think,” said Martha. “Mak’ room.”

She led Annis through them, and away up the hill home.

“Mebbe it’s true,” said one of the girls, after they had gone. “Martha wouldn’t be so stiff about it, an’ there were owt wrong.”

“Happen she’s mistaken.”

“We shall see.”

And so they dispersed.

The storm broke on Hugh next day—not more fiercely, not more crushingly.

Mrs. Arkwright said nothing to him. The little woman was not in the least disturbed by Mrs. Jumbold’s story; she believed Hugh to be an honourable and right-minded fellow, and she did not trouble herself to inquire into the charge brought against him by the spiteful scandalmonger.

“It is sure to be right, somehow,” was her internal conviction, expressed mentally

in her native tongue. "There is no occasion for me to ask questions about it; I should only get laughed at for my pains."

Neither did she speak of it to her husband till he mentioned it to her.

Hugh noticed all breakfast time that something unpleasant was brewing. He was anxious to have it over, so he broached the subject himself.

"I suppose, sir, you have heard the reports circulating about me?"

"Yes."

Mr. Arkwright looked thundery; with his brows contracted, and his eyes glittering. His way of eating indicated that he was angry, for he broke his victuals, and put it in his mouth jerkily, and between each mouthful scowled at his newspaper, without speaking.

"You have been told that I made an appointment with one of your mill girls to

meet me in Whinbury Copse, and that I kept it."

Mr. Arkwright put down his paper, put his elbows on the table, and resting his head between his palms, looked straight in his nephew's face, and said, "Go on."

"I do not know, sir, what more you have heard. Most probably a tissue of lies, for the originator of the whole story is unscrupulous."

His uncle looked gloomily at him still, and did not speak. Hugh found a difficulty in forming his sentences, on account of his agitation, he therefore paused after each to recover himself, and take breath. Mr. Arkwright offered no interruptions.

"Mrs. Jumbold overheard me tell Annis Greenwell that I wanted to speak to her in Whinbury. She followed me thither, and found me conversing with the girl, not alone, but in the presence of Martha Rhodes.

“I tell you the reason why I desired to see Annis. I love her. I have loved her ever since the flood.

“I have tried hard to conquer my feeling. I believed I had mastered it, but it conquered me. I may have acted rashly. I have asked her to be my wife.”

Mr. Arkwright snorted.

“I dare say you think me exceedingly foolish, and exceedingly headstrong——”

“I do,” like the stroke of a sledge-hammer came the words from the manufacturer.

“But I do not regret having taken this course. I have acted with honour, and have not said one word of which I am ashamed, or which I wish recalled.

“I love Annis dearly—how dearly I cannot express. I also reverence her as one in every way deserving my regard.”

“Except in station,” put in Mr. Arkwright, abruptly.

“You are right, except in station and education. I recognize in her every noble quality of Christian womanhood. Station matters little to me, poor and isolated as I am ; education may be acquired.”

Hugh, beginning to warm with his subject, overcame his nervousness.

“Yes, sir, I wish for, and I will have, no other girl for my wife but Annis. My love for her came unsought, it was struggled with desperately, it would not be overcome, and I firmly believe that where Providence draws two hearts together, it intends to unite them. It may be years before I am able to ask Annis to join her lot with mine, but I shall steadily look forward to that and work for it.”

“Let me tell you,” said Mr. Arkwright, raising his head, “that you are a confounded jackass.”

“Sir !”

“A confounded jackass.”

“Uncle, I cannot hear such expressions used, and I will not.”

“You must bear what you have called down on your own head. Are you prepared for the consequences?”

“What consequences?”

“The consequences of being regarded henceforth in the light of a JACKASS.”

“I will endure whatever I shall be called on to endure. I have taken my line. It is not an usual one, and will therefore arouse attention and elicit comment. It will be distressing, I know, to have to run the gauntlet of all the gossips in the place, but I will do it. I have done nothing wrong.”

“Hugh,” said Mr. Arkwright, “I am glad of that. That is a relief to me to hear. If you had, I would have turned you out of my doors, and you should never have set

foot within them again ; for the man who takes advantage of woman's weakness to bring shame upon her, is, in my opinion, the most detestable and contemptible scoundrel unhung. I will say this to you, I never suspected you of that. I never thought you a scoundrel, but I do think you a jackass."

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed Gretchen. "What is it all about? Mrs. Jumbold told me one tale—*ganz märchenhaft*—yesterday."

"Hold your tongue now," said Mr. Arkwright, turning sharply on her; "do not interrupt. Go on, Hugh."

"Well, sir, I have spoken to Annis, and told her that I see no prospect of making her my wife now, but that I will take her to me one day."

"Go on."

"I have nothing more to say."

"You are a fool," said Mr. Arkwright.

"I did think you would have been wiser. This comes of being brought up out of the world ; had you been reared in a town and not in the country, among men of business and not parsons, this would never have happened. You must think no more of it. It can never be."

"It shall be, some day, if we live."

"Nonsense. Don't make matters worse by obstinacy. You have done an idiotic act, don't stick to it."

"I shall stick to it."

"We shall see. In a few months the fancy will have worn off, and you will hear reason."

"It is no mere fancy, uncle."

"That time alone will prove. We must quiet the girl with a present of a few pounds, and marry her to some young fellow or other, and so settle the matter."

"That shall never be."

"Now, Hugh, listen to reason. You

cannot possibly marry a girl so beneath you in position ; if you were to do so, she would not be received into society by those who rank with you, and it would be a constant source of humiliation to you, to find your wife looked down upon. Her way of thinking will be entirely distinct from yours. At first, the charm of a pretty face, and a simple, unsophisticated nature would delight you, but after these attractions were worn off, you would feel the want of education, and refinement of manner ; in society you would be liable to meet with a thousand rebuffs, and to have your sensibilities hurt by casual remarks, which will strike home to you as barbed arrows. You do not know what effect a change of station would produce on a girl of this sort ; from being a quiet and modest lass, she might develop into a vulgar and coarse woman. If you had children, they would take after the mother,

and your home would become miserable, your temper would sour, and you would seek in dissipation the happiness which your own house ceased to afford. Ill-assorted marriages rarely turn out well. There, Hugh, I have told you what is before you if you persevere in your madness. Now look to the other prospect open to you. Without intending to flatter you, I may say that you have qualities and looks which will put you in a good way to make a fortune. A little attention and application, and you will be qualified to become partner in my business ; you may look about you for a young lady with money—such as Miss Doldrums, whose means would be invaluable, and you could buy a country house, and set up as a country gentleman, become a magistrate, and make a family.”

Hugh did not speak immediately ; when he did, he said, quietly and firmly :

“ I have made my choice.”

“ Well, well !” said Mr. Arkwright ; “ the event will not always follow our wish and planning. We shall see ! Only, would to heaven you had not made a fool of yourself. You will have all Sowden gossiping about you for some weeks. Now, if you please, let us change the topic. I shall want you to go to Bradford for me to-day, on business.”

Hugh was surprised at Mr. Arkwright having kept his coolness ; he had expected him to have burst into a fit of anger, and to have threatened to turn him from his door and disinherit him.

But Mr. Arkwright was a man of the world. He knew that young men fall in love, generally very foolishly ; that, when they are in this condition, they are not amenable to reason. He took Hugh’s affair to heart, chiefly because it was likely to cause

scandal; that it would end as Hugh anticipated, he never for a moment supposed. His course was to pooh-pooh the whole concern, throw a blaze of common-sense over it, and leave time to cool the ardour of youth. He expected to find his nephew full of sentiment, romance, and obstinacy at first, and he had no doubt that after a few weeks or months, his resolution would waver, the sentiment would dissolve before matter-of-fact, the romance would leak away, and the obstinacy break down, and then some arrangement could be come to, agreeable to both parties, to break off the silly engagement, and laugh it away as a folly of the past.

Mr. Arkwright knew that if he were to go into a passion and threaten Hugh, it would make the young man ten times more resolute, but that if he passed this act over, his nephew would feel the kindness, and

consider himself under an obligation. He was a kindhearted man also in his rough way, and he could not help compassionating the young man in his awkward position, as the object of all eyes, ears, and tongues in the place. He considered Hugh a fool, but he was deserving of commiseration rather than chastisement.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. FURNESS, Vicar of Sowden, was walking to the parsonage with short, rapid steps, his head a little on one side, and his shoulder very close to the wall. He was an old man now. He had been moulded by Oxford in its ancient days, when Newman and Keble were presiding spirits, and from the former he had inherited the trick of wearing his hat on the back of his head, and from the latter he had imbibed a devotion to swallow-tailed coats.

He was a Yorkshireman by birth and parentage, but no Yorkshireman in appearance.

From the county to which he belonged,

he had derived a strength of purpose and determination of character which no opposition could break. To his parentage and education he owed a refinement and courtesy of manner belonging to an old school of politeness, that has, alas ! almost disappeared.

He was a short, dapper man, without colour, closely-shaven, and with short-cut grey, or nearly white^h air, frail in constitution, and with little bodily strength. He belonged to an ecclesiastical type rarely met with. We are accustomed to the self-asserting, self-centred Evangelical ; to the blustering and secular Broad Churchman, and to the dilettante Honeyman of Ritualism ; but Mr. Furness was detached from any one of these classes. He was an indefatigable parish priest of the old Tractarian school, who clung to the traditions of his youth, and revered the names of Pusey, Newman, Froude, Williams, and Keble, as those of redoubtable

leaders, in whose traces he was proud to walk.

The Wesleyans of his parish shook their heads over him, and declared that he preached nothing but morality; but when the vicar was roused night after night by the noise of drunken riots in the street, when he found that trade was fast degenerating under competition into fraud, and when he saw that the number of bastards was rapidly on the increase in the parish register, he convinced himself that morality was, on the whole, not a doctrine so unnecessary to be taught in the pulpit as the advocates of justification by faith and free grace supposed. Indeed, it is a pity that the worthlessness of virtue is so eagerly insisted on by dissenting and evangelical preachers, for their hearers have taken them at their word, and combine immorality in every form with the most fervent professions

of faith, and confidence in their election. Suddenly Mr. Furness was brought to an abrupt standstill by means of an umbrella handle which caught him over the shoulder.

“You can stop a moment,” said Mrs. Jumbold, “I’ve got something to say to you, vicar.”

Mr. Furness turned round, and smiling, extended his hand.

“A beautiful day, Mrs. Jumbold.”

“So, so. I say, have you heard?”

“Heard what?”

“Oh! the news.”

“Really, I have no time to look in at the Institute now. I get up all my news of the week from the *Guardian* on Saturday, and to-day is Friday, you know. To-morrow I shall be well posted up. To-day, I am ignorant of all that has taken place the world through during the last six days.”

“Oh! I don’t mean news of that sort.

But, vicar, first of all, I want to know why that curate of yours left out the General Thanksgiving on Sunday, eh?"

"Did he? I did not observe it. It was omitted by accident, I suppose."

"No, no. There was some meaning in it, some object. Now, none of your popish ways with me. I won't have any of your ritualism, I can tell you; so you speak to him, will you? Now, the news; of course you have heard it, about Mr. Hugh Arkwright?"

"I have heard nothing more than that you have been talking about him all round the parish," said the clergyman, giving her a quiet stab.

Mrs. Jumbold coloured; her nose became purple. She had received similar thrusts on other occasions, and she did not like the vicar for that reason. To her friends, she explained that she did not approve of his opinions.

As a general rule, people hold those religious views which best suit their convenience, sometimes they form their opinions in a spirit of opposition. Not one in a thousand is High Church, Low Church, Catholic, or Protestant on conviction.

“I saw what took place,” said Mrs. Jumbold.

“Did you, indeed?” The tone of the vicar’s voice deprecated persevering in the subject, but the doctor’s wife was not disposed to be silent, or to turn from that topic.

“Yes, I saw it all. Very immoral conduct.”

“What do you mean by immoral?” asked the vicar; “words should be well weighed before they are uttered, especially when they touch the character of another.”

“Immoral! Of course I know what I mean by immoral—licentious. There, sir!”

The vicar looked up at the church clock.

“I think you must excuse me, Mrs. Jumbold, it is near my dinner hour, and though that is not an excuse to be ordinarily made to a lady, yet you know me, and that I depend on my meals entirely, and utterly collapse if I do not have them at the moment that nature cries out.”

“But you haven’t heard me,” said Mrs. Jumbold, throwing up her umbrella again, with the crook towards her pastor, as though she were about to catch him by it, and retain him till he had heard what she had to relate.

The vicar dreaded this umbrella handle. Once it had caught in his coat-pocket, and had torn the cloth. On another occasion it had nearly prostrated him, by catching his knee.

“I say,” pursued Mrs. Jumbold, “one of your Sunday-school teachers, too. I always

said you did wrong in getting young men and women to take classes. They bring discredit on the church. Of course you dismiss him from the school?"

"Certainly not."

"What! allow a profligate, licentious, dissolute——"

"Mrs. Jumbold, I want my dinner. Nature cries out, I shall collapse."

The handle of the umbrella clasped him at once.

"You will turn that libertine out, will you not?"

"My good lady, I have already hinted to you how distasteful this subject is to me."

"Of course it is!" exclaimed the doctor's wife, in a tone of triumph. "What else could it be, when Hugh Arkwright is one of your teachers, and the young woman was one of your confirmation candidates last March."

“I daresay you will detain me no longer. An engine will not work without coal, and my system must have its carbon supplied at the right moment——”

“You will dismiss him, won’t you?”

“I shall not, Mrs. Jumbold. Hugh Arkwright is an honourable man. He may have been foolish, but he has not done anything which is wrong. Have you never acted in a precipitate and injudicious manner, may I ask?”

“Never, Mr. Furness,” replied the doctor’s wife, bridling up.

“Not when——.” He was on the point of alluding to an exceedingly silly act of Mrs. Jumbold in forcing her husband to leave a good practice for that of Sowden, to please a whim of her own; but he refrained himself.

“You must allow me to speak one word to you, as your friend and pastor,” said the

vicar, laying his small and delicate hand on the lady's wrist : " I think I have read somewhere about a good man who passed everything he wished to say of another person through three sieves. The first was, ' Is it true ? ' The second, ' Is it kind ? ' The third, ' Is it necessary ? ' Might I commend that example to your consideration ? Now, good morning."

Turning sharply round, he saw a lady in a pearl-grey silk dress, with a black belt and a rose in it, step towards him across the road.

" Bessie !" he exclaimed, with joy. " My dear sister ! How unexpected this is. Did you drop from the clouds, or rise through a trap-door in the earth ?"

Then, turning to Mrs. Jumbold, he introduced his sister to the doctor's wife.

" How did you leave my mother ?" he asked, looking radiant with delight and pride on Miss Furness.

“She is very much the same as usual, William.”

“We’re likely to have nasty trying weather for old people,” said Mrs. Jumbold. “This month generally uses them badly, the wind is so keen.”

“We shall do our best to keep her out of the wind,” said Miss Furness, smiling. “Our house is draught-proof, I assure you.”

“Ah, you can’t keep out east wind. There’s a nature in it which penetrates everywhere, a life-destroying nature I call it. It comes in with the air. You don’t hermetically seal Mrs. Furness up, I suppose?”

“Bessie, you must be quite hungry,” said the vicar.

“I am indeed. The journey from York is tedious, on account of the stoppage and change of trains at Normanton, and the delay at Wakefield.”

“You are famished, are you?” asked Mr. Furness.

“Well, I can’t quite say that; but I shall be ready for your dinner. You dine at one, do you not?”

“At one, punctually,” replied the vicar. “And now,” looking up at the clock, “it is ten minutes past.”

“Ah!” put in Mrs. Jumbold, “servants ain’t punctual. It’s no use expecting it. I’ve given over looking for times to be kept. Domestics are not what they once were. I can’t keep cook or housemaid; they give themselves such airs and demand such wages, and do so little, that it puts me out of patience. This comes of your education. I never liked the scheme of education—you went too high.”

“Did you find your servants highly cultivated in intellect, and refined in taste?” asked Miss Furness.

"No, that they are not. I fancy sometimes, we shall have to scrub our own floors, we are come to such a pass."

"I think it would be well," said the vicar, slyly, "if all people would scrub and clean their own houses, and then they would be less disposed to observe, or imagine they observe, dirt on their neighbours' walls and floors. I wish you good morning." And he dexterously slipped beyond reach of the umbrella-handle.

When Mr. Furness entered the parsonage with his sister, he gave a sigh of relief.

"What is that sigh for?" asked Bessie.

"Never mind, dear, or you will make me say something which will stick in one or two of the sieves, though it would pass only too readily through the first. What have you popped in on me in this unexpected manner for?"

"Oh, William! let us have dinner first,

and then I will tell you. I knew what you were driving at, when you asked me whether I was hungry. Men are egotistical things—even the best of them, and their thoughts are centred on self. When you pretended such sympathy with me, you were thinking of yourself all the while.”

“I protest, Bessie, I did think of you.”

“Yes, but only because you were yourself in want of dinner.”

“What have you come about, tell me?”

“Not till you have had something to eat.”

“Is it anything touching my mother?”

“Yes.”

“Nothing serious?”

“No; don’t be frightened. She is as usual.”

After the roast leg of mutton had been removed, and the tapioca pudding was brought on, the vicar, unable to repress his curiosity any longer, said:

"Bessie, what have you come about?"

"I will tell you now. I want some one to help me in looking after mother. I must have a little relief. The dear old lady is somewhat exacting, and I can scarcely get out of doors for fresh air, or to buy what is necessary for the house. Do you know of any one who would do?"

"There is Susan Glover," said one of the curates.

"I think Elizabeth Jessop would do better," observed the second curate.

"Elizabeth Jessop wouldn't do at all," remarked the first, sententiously.

"Why not?"

"There are reasons"—mysteriously.

"Excuse me," said the vicar, "but I doubt whether Susan Glover is *quite* the person who would do."

"She is a very respectable person."

"I readily allow that, but she is too old

for the peculiar sort of work, and has not tenderness sufficient for a nurse."

"Then Elizabeth Jessop," suggested the second curate again.

"I tell you, she won't do," said the first, impatiently.

"I do not see why not."

The first curate bent over towards the younger, and whispered, "Erysipelas."

As he was an authority on parochial infirmities, from whom there was no appeal, not even to Mr. Jumbold, the second curate relapsed into silence, with a shudder, and gave up his opinion instantly.

"I will think it over," said the vicar. "If you hear from me in a week or fortnight, it will do, I daresay."

"Yes, William, very well."

"Do you go back to York to-night?" asked one of the curates.

"I return this afternoon," replied Miss

Furness. "I have come to take a peep at my brother, but I am not able to spare much time, as Mrs. Furness is so poorly."

The vicar rose and said grace, and then retired with his sister to his room, and was closeted with her, till it was time for her to return.

CHAPTER XIX.

AT twelve o'clock Mr. Arkwright put his head out of the office door, summoned John Rhodes, who was passing, and said, "John! send me that girl, Annis Greenwell. I want to speak to her while Mr. Hugh is out of the way."

"All right, sir," answered the wool-sorter, with a grin. "I reckon these young things is like barrels o' gunpowder."

"A little cold water is wanted, John. Nothing like a souse."

"I'm afeared t' cold water did t' job," said John.

"How so?"

"Why, 'twor flood set it all agait, if what

folks say be true. You see, sir, many waters will set love ablaze, and won't quench it, nother."

"But they may slake it," said Mr. Arkwright.

"Happen 't may. But when t' prophet Elijah built his altar a'top o' Carmel, they teemed a deal o' water over 't. However, when t' fire fell fra heaven, it just made t' water o' no account, but it licked up meat and wood and stones and water, and all t' bag o' tricks."

"Well," Mr. Arkwright observed, "I believe women are like those torpedos or infernal machines which blow up under water as readily as on ground. I remember to have read somewhere that the old Romans, when they were burning their dead, used to put one female corpse to three males, because it was supposed to contain so much more oil than the others that it facilitated their

incremation. For my part, I think there is combustible material in one woman to set any number of men in a blaze."

John shook his head, and chuckled. Then, composing his face, he said :

"I think Annis would ha' been right enew if Mr. Hugh 'd ha' let her alone, poor lass ! I doubt she'd ever ha' given him a thowt if he hadn't trailed after her. So tha munna lay 't all to t' lass's account. She's as good and modest a bairn as tha can find, choose how ; but ye canna expect that a flock o' wool wi' 'nt burn if ya put it i' t' middle o' a blaze."

"Well, John ; send her to me."

A few minutes after the poor little thing came quaking into the office as frightened as a mouse under the paw of a cat. Mr. Arkwright sat at his desk making entries in his ledger, and pasting letters into the correspondence book without appearing to notice

her. He had observed her alarm, and he considerably gave her a little while in which to compose herself. But much time could not be wasted; he wanted his dinner, and after the lapse of a few minutes he looked up sharply at her, and said:

“Now, then, what’s all this nonsense about?”

Annis made no answer. She stood in the door fumbling with her pinafore, and with her head bent down. She had a new crimson kerchief on her head. Girls do not wear mourning when they are at their work, and Martha had given her this one. There came in a sunbeam at the office window, and fell over her head and breast, bringing out the colours in all their intensity against the grey shadows of the outer passage into which the door opened. If Mr. Arkwright had possessed the slightest artistic feeling, he would have been charmed with the

subject before him. A patch of crimson, a bent face, with half-lit, delicately-hued cheek of the softest rose bloom, a white pinafore, with the shadow of the bowed head striking across it, a graceful pair of nervously-moving hands plucking the white smock into knots with deeply-marked folds, and then changing them, and over the brow two little sweeps of the brightest amber gathered back beneath the handkerchief, but sufficient to arrest the sun; and below, out of the full light, the purple of a skirt, and a couple of little feet in black shoes, which could not keep quiet.

But Mr. Arkwright had not a trace of art-appreciation in his whole being, and he saw nothing before him but a little girl who received seven shillings a week, on an average, for reeling, and who had brought his nephew into a hobble.

“Shut the door behind you.”

The girl obeyed. It was a glass door. The passage without was a roomy entrance to the woolsorting and packing departments.

“Now, then, tell me how you have got into this pickle?”

She could not answer. Her employer saw it; so he spoke again:

“Annis Greenwell, you and Hugh have made great fools of yourselves. I believe the fault lies with that great blundering booby, my nephew, and that you have been only soft, and not designing. I do not believe that you made any attempt to entrap him.”

The girl looked up earnestly, and attempted to speak, but the words died on her lips.

“I understand you,” said Mr. Arkwright. “I quite believe what you wish to say, that you had not thought of Hugh till Hugh thought of you. Is it not so?”

She nodded.

“ You must think no more of him, and he must think no more of you.”

She glanced at him with an imploring expression ; spots of carnation starting to her cheek, and as suddenly dying from it.

“ You absurd little creature,” said Mr. Arkwright, “ do you think it possible that your silly romance should be suffered to go any further ? Of course not. You must see very well that it is folly. Does not every one around you say so ? What advice do John and Mrs. Rhodes give you ? What do the girls you work with cast in your teeth ? Has it brought you happiness ? Tell me now, are you not very wretched ? ”

She put her hands over her face, and her bosom tossed convulsively.

“ Sit down on that chair whilst I talk to you rationally. I will not speak to you violently, but reasonably and temperately. Do you think that you are a suitable com-

panion for my nephew ? Now answer that ; I really must hear your reply."

She clasped her hands on her lap as she sank on the chair. After a brief struggle she said, in a faint whisper :

"No."

"No, you are not. Hugh is a man of education, and accustomed to society perfectly distinct from that in which you move. His speech is quite different from yours, and still greater is the divergence in your ways of thinking. If I were suddenly to transport you to my drawing-room, and bid you spend your day there receiving visitors and entertaining guests, you would be at a loss how to act : you would feel that you were in a sphere with which you were wholly unacquainted, among people before whom you would shrink with humiliation, conscious of your inferiority in breeding, in manners, and in expression. You would want to run

away to the kitchen. Hugh's wife must not be a cook, but a lady. A life in a forced and unnatural position would be a daily misery to you, and you would sigh for the freedom of your old associations and habits. Ladies in the upper classes have their minds, their words, their bodies put into stays at early infancy. Their thoughts, their conversation, their bodies grow in stays, and live in stays, and can never get out of stays. They do not feel the restraint because they have never known what it is to be without stays; but you, who live in a natural condition, would feel it intolerable to be all at once seized upon, and surrounded body, soul, and spirit with whalebone and irons, from which you were never to escape. How would you like me to take a great strap and fling it round your chest, and gird it tighter, tighter, tighter, till all power of respiration and circulation was at an end? Now, if

you became a lady, my poor child, we should have to lace up your thoughts tighter, tighter, tighter till they could not flow, and your words till they were stiffened into the most rigid platitudes. Why! when you felt the great iron bones beginning to encircle you, and the laces to be drawn tight, you would give a scream, and away you would fly to your freedom and nature again; and then what would become of Hugh?"

He paused and looked at her. She was listening intently, with her right elbow on the desk—Hugh's own desk—and her head resting in her palm, whilst the other arm hung on her lap, listlessly. There was a gloss on her cheek, such as we see on a leaf after rain, for the tears trickled silently over her face.

"Poor child!" said Mr. Arkwright, "I am sorry you are in trouble, but it is the consequence of your own folly, or rather of

that of Hugh, for he is to blame in the matter, not you. Tell me now, should you like to be a grand lady seeing plenty of company?"

"No, no, no, sir!" she said, sobbing out.

"Come, wipe your eyes and be quiet. I must put the case very plainly before you, because you young folk see nothing but the glitter of the outside, and never get below the surface, unless an older and wiser hand obliges you. Do you not find, Annis, that your way of talking is very different from ours? and do you think that you could learn to give up the old brogue for proper grammatical English? Would not you fear whenever you opened your mouth that you were saying something wrong which would make others stare and laugh, and fill you and Hugh with shame?"

She answered with a long-drawn, deep

sigh, and a clear drop sparkling in the noon-day sunbeam, which fell on the desk.

“Now, what has your love-folly brought you to? And not you only, remember, but Hugh as well. You are both wretched.”

She looked up suddenly, with her great lustrous eyes dulled with tears, and asked in a plaintive tone :

“Please, is he very wretched, Mr. Arkwright?”

“Yes, Annis, very. He must be so, with all Sowden gossiping about him, and saying very bad, very wicked things of him.”

She put her face down on the desk and threw out her bare arms over it, with her hands spread out, as though repelling something, and hiding her eyes from some object, and stopping her ears to some voice.

Mr. Arkwright left his seat and went over to her, and putting his hand gently on her shoulder, said, in a kindly tone :

“My poor, silly little thing! I will not distress you more than I can help, but you must hear to what a pass you have brought matters. Will you sit up, and listen to me?”

She half raised her head, and then let it fall again.

“Well, never mind, hide your face like that, but keep your ears open.”

He resumed his seat, and continued :

“This romantic passion will soon evaporate, and Hugh will be exceedingly sorry for what he has done. Mind you, Annis, he is honourable, and he will not forsake you; he will not surrender you, without your frankly accorded permission. I speak to you now in a way I would not speak to any other. You have it in your power to ruin my nephew’s happiness and prospects if you choose. You may hold him to his engagement if you like. His welfare is entirely in

your hands; you may think me unwise to tell you this, but I do so because I believe you to be as honourable and as willing to do what is right as—as—as Hugh, I will say. Now, it is for you to make your choice. If you keep Hugh to his word, I wash my hands of him; I shall send him about his business, he can no longer remain here, and I cannot allow myself to be brought into relationship with half the working people in the place. He shall go from Sowden and shift for himself elsewhere. I intended to teach him the trade, and then to admit him to partnership with myself, and finally to surrender the business into his hands; but that will be frustrated by his taking you to wife. I cannot, and I will not allow that. You may saddle yourself upon him if you will. Then, in future years, he will have to thank you if he loses my property, and if he comes to poverty. Perhaps elsewhere he

may obtain a clerkship, and struggle on, but he will not be able to educate his children, and bring them up as he was brought up ; and he will look repiningly to the past and wish he had not been such a fool as to cast his eyes below his station in life, and lose thereby the friendship of the only relative who could have advanced him. Now, Annis, I ask you a question. Do you really love my nephew, Hugh ?”

She looked up, and turned her head, without lifting her arms from the desk on which they were extended. With a wailing reality in her words, she answered :

“I do. Oh ! I do indeed ; wi’ my whole heart.”

“The question is, whether you love him so selfishly as to desire to ruin his prospects rather than lose him ?”

“I wouldn’t do him a harm for owt.”

“Will you give him up, Annis ? It comes

to this, he or you must leave Sowden. If you refuse to surrender him, I walk him out of my house, and wash my hands of all concern in him: but if you have the courage and right feeling to take the course I suggest, you may both be happy some day, but—not together. What's that noise?"

The noise was the rattling of the desk against the wall, occasioned by the agonizing struggle in the girl's bosom.

"I love him. I love him over weel!" she said, between her sobs.

"If you really love him well, you will consider his advantage rather than your own."

"I'll go," she said, without looking up; "I'll go, and I'll never see my own poor lad more."

"You have relations to go to, I suppose."

She made a motion with her head, which might be taken either way; Mr. Arkwright took it for assent. She was too agitated to

be able to bear much further exhortation, and the manufacturer considerably turned upon his seat, and continued his work at the correspondence-book.

It took him ten minutes or a quarter of an hour to finish what he was about, and when it was done, he shut the book noisily, took his hat, left his seat, and looked at Annis.

She lay still at the desk, with her bare arms stretched towards the window, and her crimson coif resting between them, and one foot turned round the leg of the stool.

“Come, Annis,” he said, “you must go now. I am going to lock up.”

She rose mechanically from her place, her face was pale and tear-stained, and she moved towards the door without showing symptoms of an inclination to speak.

“Little girl,” said Mr. Arkwright, holding her back with one hand, and looking

gravely, almost sternly, into her twilight eyes, "may I trust you to hold to your determination?"

"You may."

"You will give up all hopes of being Hugh's wife?"

"Yes."

"You will leave Sowden as soon as you possibly can?"

"I will."

"You will cease to love Hugh?"

"That can never be," she answered, with vehemence, the faded light shooting once more into her eyes, and the colour leaping into her cheek.

"Well, well, you will try to forget him."

"I cannot promise that," she said, sadly. "And please, sir," she asked, piteously, "may I see him once more, to say good-bye?"

Mr. Arkwright hesitated.

"Only once," he answered, making a

virtue of necessity, feeling sure that whether he gave leave or not, the two would not part without a farewell ; “ only once, and that on condition you do not tell Hugh where you are going to, or give him any clue to discovering your whereabouts.”

“ Varry weel,” she said. “ I shall see him once more.”

“ Stay, Annis,” Mr. Arkwright called after her, as she stepped through the doorway, “ here, take this to help you on your way. Mind, I trust you.” He held out to her a five-pound note.

“ Nay,” she said, “ I do not want it.”

“ Annis, I insist. It is but just ; I am sending you from your work, where you earn your livelihood, to where you may be long before you find employment. It is a matter of conscience with me. Take this. And now go home, never mind about coming back to the mill this afternoon. Your heart

is sore, and you will be better out of the way of the chattering, prying girls, who are sure to fly on you the moment they have an opportunity."

The poor child left the office, and walked slowly up the yard. At the gate was Martha. She had waited there patiently, with her eye on the door into the entrance passage, from the moment that the whistle dismissed the hands, till her cousin came out. Her father and Susan had gone home to dinner without her.

"Oh, Martha!" said Annis, sadly, "hast thou not been home?"

"Nay, lass; I wouldn't go bout thee. It's over-late now, and we mun do wi' no dinner to-day."

"I'm boun' home," said Annis; "I'm not coming to t' miln no more."

"Eh!" then, after a little thought, "but it's best so."

Then putting her arm round her, Martha accompanied her the greater part of the way home. •

“Tha looks rueful,” said Martha, parting with her.

“Gie me a kiss, lass !” pleaded Annis, despairingly. “I’m ower sick at heart.”

When she reached home, she hurried upstairs and cast herself upon her bed, to weep unrestrainedly.

The afternoon glided by, and still she sobbed, and at intervals her feeble voice was lifted with the cry :

“I cannot bear it ! Oh, Lord ! thy will, not mine, be done ! but I do love him, and I ever shall !” And she took a little brooch of jet, with a crystal in it, and buckled it on the bosom of her smock, and drew the coverlet over her, for she was cold, crossed her hands on the ornament, pressing it to her, and cried, and fell asleep.

That same afternoon Hugh returned from Bradford ; the mill was near the station, so he went straight to it, and entered the office, where he found his uncle busy, with his back to him, writing.

“ Here are letters to write ; be sharp ! ” said Mr. Arkwright, without looking up, thrusting some memoranda towards him.

Hugh brushed them up, and went towards his desk.

“ Uncle,” he said, suddenly, “ who has been here ? The desk is wet ; it looks as if tears had dribbled over it.”

“ Annis Greenwell has been there,” answered Mr. Arkwright, still bending over his correspondence.

Hugh glanced at his uncle, and seeing that he was not observing, put his hand into his bosom, and drew forth a crimson handkerchief, wherewith he tenderly wiped up the drops, tenderly as if he had wiped

them from the glistening cheek of his poor little girl. Then he replaced the kerchief near his heart, and leaning over the stained board, he said to himself :

“ She has consecrated this place, and it is holy ground henceforth.”

CHAPTER XX.

Mrs. RHODES had observed Annis enter and run upstairs. Supposing her to be unwell with headache or some trifling malady, and being very busy herself, she did not trouble herself about her till it drew near to six o'clock, when, her work being over, she went in search of the girl, and found her asleep on the bed.

Mrs. Rhodes proceeded to arouse her, and bid her come down and have her tea. Annis opened her dim eyes as consciousness returned, and, with her hand on the brooch, answered she would be ready directly. Then she washed her face, feeling refreshed by her

nap, put off her working-clothes, and descended the stairs.

“You look badly,” said Mrs. Rhodes. “Take a sup o’ tea; maybe it’ll bring you round a bit, it does me mostly when I’m out o’ sorts.”

“I don’t think it’ll mend me,” answered Annis.

“Eh, lass,” the woman said, with a sly look, “there’s somebody wants to see thee this neet; he’s bid me tell thee to meet him i’ t’ Sandy-pit Lane, at half-past eight o’clock.”

Annis’s face kindled, she looked up at Mrs. Rhodes, and saw a twinkle in her eyes.

“Is’t truth? Tha’rt none boune to deceive me?”

“Nay, what should I be deceiving thee for? It’s truth what I said.”

She spoke sharply, knowing that though her words were true, they conveyed a wrong

impression to the girl ; who supposed Mrs. Rhodes referred to a person very different from the man-monkey.

For the next two hours the colour shone brightly in the girl's cheeks. She thought that Hugh had been to the house, and left the message for her, and now she was to see him for the last time, and bid him farewell. It would break her heart to part with him, but there was pleasure in the prospect of seeing him once again, and hearing him tell her how precious she was to him, and how dearly he loved her. The little heart was warm within. A while before it had been as a stone. She put from her the thought that she was to be separated from him for ever, and yielded, for the little while that remained, to the pleasing prospect of being once more by his side.

When Martha came in, her mother, suspecting that Annis would want to take her

friend with her, sent Martha off on an errand which would prevent her accompanying Annis.

At ten minutes past eight the girl fastened her silk kerchief round her neck with the brooch Hugh had given her, put on her black gown and a black bonnet, took an umbrella, as the night was cloudy and there might be rain, and started for the lane.

The moon was up, but it cast a dim, watery glimmer over the country, making the black outline of the hills and moor-tops distinct against the white, curdy vapours. Occasionally a silver pencil of light pierced the veil, and traced a line of glaring white along the slopes of the fells, catching Stoodley Pike, diving into one of the cross vales, then climbing a spur of Blackstone Edge, illuming the gaunt ridge of Tom Tittermans, turning the dingy stream of the Calder into a flood of liquid silver, as it

leaped upon it, then running away over Black Nab, and vanishing. The furze, or whin, as Yorkshire people call it, was alight on the Nab. It had been fired during the day, and the hill-side was starred with winking sparks, whilst near the top the dry, prickly growth was flaming, and dusky figures were visible moving about the fires, running here and there, urging the conflagration onward, leading it from one whin-clump to another, and rejoicing when the flame roared up from a dense mass of dry shrubs.

The rush of the water over the weir was audible, swelling into distinctness on the wind, and fading into a murmur as it died away. Over Halifax the clouds reflected the illuminated streets, ruddy on their under surfaces, pallid towards the moon above. To the north-east, where there were iron-works, over the hill, the clouds glared in

throbs, pulsating into fire, and falling back into gloom.

Annis, as she stole along the lane leading to the fork whence branched off the way to the sandpit and the other by Mr. Arkwright's house to the village of Askroyd, passed some solitary pairs of lovers talking, and heard one girl say to her sweetheart :

“Si' there, lad, yond's that lass as Hugh Arkwright's followin'. I reckon she's boune to meet him now.”

“Eh!” said another, addressing Annis with a laugh, “tha'rt i' grand fettle to-neet !”

A little out of the town, however, there was no one. Annis reached the point where the two lanes diverged, and with beating heart turned down that leading to her old home, a lane which was called after the sandpit in which her mother's cottage had stood. Here the hedges were high, and shut out the prospect towards the valley,

and trees hung overhead, so that the way was exceedingly dark. It had lately been stoned for some distance, and it was very unpleasant walking over the slag which had been used for the purpose. Large cakes of vitrified material, the refuse of the iron furnaces, are employed through the neighbourhood for the mending of highways and parish roads, to the great detriment of boots and shoes, till the glassy fragments are resolved into dust, which becomes very disagreeable in windy weather, for then eyes, nostrils, ears, and mouth are filled with tiny, vitreous particles, causing acute pain.

In walking over the fresh-metalled way, Annis's footsteps were audible as she dislodged some stones, and stumbled on others. She was glad when she had reached the unstoned path, a hundred yards from the entrance of the lane.

It was there that she saw some one

awaiting her. When she caught sight of the figure her feet moved more nimbly, and in a moment she was by him.

“Oh, Hugh!”

“That ain’t my name,” said the voice of the man-monkey. “So you little roguish kitling, you’re come to me!”

She started back with terror.

He put his hand out to her, but she drew away.

“Didn’t you expect to see me here, eh?” he asked. “Didn’t yer mother—nay, but whoo ain’t your mother nither—didn’t whoo tell thee I were here a waitin’ for thee?”

“Oh, no, no! I thowt ’t were some one else,” moaned Annis.

“Eh! you did, did you? I wi’nt do as well as another, happen. You don’t fancy me, eh? Now, lass, bide still. I’ve a deal I want to say to thee. Bide still, I say, or I’ll mak’ thee!”

She stepped backward, but remained paralyzed with terror as he waved his long arm over her, and the black hand smote across the moon, casting a shadow on her face.

"Let me go—oh, Mr. Grover, please let me go!" she pleaded.

"I reckon I'll do now't o' th' sort," answered the man-monkey, with a loud gulping laugh. "Come along th' lane wi' me."

"No, no!" she said, agonized with fear. "Oh, Mr. Grover, please say what you have to say, and let me go home."

"So you cam' out to meet another, eh? And who may he be?"

She would not answer.

"You've yer sweetheart, I reckon. Lasses a'most a'ways has if they can get 'em. Times they has three or four if they be good-lookin' as thou art. Hast thou got more nor one, eh?"

Annis stood quailing before him, fascinated by his glaring eyes and wild gestures. In the moonlight, which for a while broke over the lane, his horrible malformation became doubly frightful. The short bowed legs, the long body and lengthy arms ever in violent motion, cast a shadow on the ground that fearfully caricatured what was actually monstrous. Every now and then the man's face, with the flat nose, huge jowl, protruding eyebrows, and retreating forehead, became vividly distinct in the moonlight.

"Look you here, lass," continued the man-monkey, "I'm just goin' to ax you to put your horses along wi' mine. What d' yer say to that, yer minx?" and he chucked her under the chin. She recoiled from him with curdling blood; he did not, or would not, notice the repugnance expressed by her moon-illuminated countenance,

but went on: "Yer gigglin' kitling! I think we'd do grand together. Ya sees I'm doin' nicely i' my trade o' th' Gospel. Th' Lord blesses me, and I'm middlin' off for brass. Si' there, lass!" He drew a handful of silver from his pocket, and poured it from one palm to the other, letting it glitter and tinkle before her. "I get on famous. Ya can ha' bonnets and feathers and crinolines, and owt tha' likes, if tha'lt come wi' me. Happen tha might turn out a rare good preacher, too, byme-by, an' that 'ud be a new sensation. Eh! lass, but it's a grand life going about frae place to place an' getting a bellyfu' wherever one goes, and given th' best o' all. I've tried a many trades, but I fancies preachin' best. It brings in a vast o' brass, and there's a deal o' pleasure in it. For thou sees it don't matter a damn what one does when a chap is justified by faith. Come, lass, tha'lt be mine, I know tha

wilt. Glory be ! I said so ;” and he stooped over her to kiss her.

With a feeble cry she beat him off with her umbrella.

“Keep back!” she said. “Don’t touch me !”

“Nay !” laughed he, “thae ’lt know better nor say that to me. Do’st thae know who I am ? I a’most known ower Yarkshire and all th’ world. Eh ! I’m a famous man ; I’m a man mony a lass ’ud gie her lugs to be able to call her aine, or mebbe to ha’ a smack o’ th’ lips frae. Lass ! iverybody’s heard o’ Richard Grover, th’ convarted man-monkey, as went i’ th’ caravans, and wor showed off as a live gorilla frae th’ wilds o’ Africa. I used to eat rats afore th’ folk—rats as wor wick (alive). I napped off their heads and I rived th’ skin off, and I ate ’em rair (raw). I’m varry sure tha’ll none say tha wi’nt come along wi’ me, and be glorified and justified.”

Annis suddenly turned and fled.

“Heigh!” roared the man-monkey, leaping, baboon-like, after her, and catching her by the shoulders with his great hands. “That wi’nt do, nohow. What do’st mean, eh?”

A wild bitter cry of “Hugh!” escaped the poor girl’s lips. It rang out in the still night with piercing distinctness, and was caught and flung back in a lower tone by the wood up the glen.

“I’ll stop that,” growled Richard, whose blood began to rise. “Run if thae durst.”

He let her go cautiously, and put his hand in his pocket. In a moment she started forward again. At once a handkerchief flapped in the wind, was whisked round her throat, and twisted by a huge hand with violence at the back of her neck.

At the next instant the arms of the man-monkey were wrenched away, a huge black shade fell over the road.

“Run, run !” bellowed a thrilling bass voice.

Annis was free ; without turning to look who had liberated her, she ran, tripping and falling, and picking herself up again, and running further till she had cleared the lane, and was in the road, flying home.

Grover was in the hands of one mightier than himself, who held him pinioned, with his arms behind his back till the sound of the girl’s feet had died away in the distance. Then the man-monkey felt himself swung round, and grasped on the shoulders, and shaken furiously, and then steadied. He looked up terrified in the face of him who held him.

“Earnshaw !”

“Dick !”

The man-monkey cowered before the black, glowing eyes which were fixed on him—cowered, bending and quaking as though

palsied, with livid face, and lifted deprecating hands, and knees that failed to sustain him.

“Dick,” said the bass voice in its deepest tones, “I have you now. You d——d sneaking villain that you are, skulking hypocrite that you are! I have you at last!”

“Joe! oh, Joe! do nowt to me!” gasped the writhing, quivering wretch. “It warn’t me. I swear it warn’t.”

“It was you, you villain. I know it was you. Look at your work!” The watchman turned himself about that the moon might glare over his maimed features. “Look at your work!” he roared, dragging Grover up from the ground on which he had sunk in a great bony, straggling heap. “Up with you! Look, look, look!” He slung him up into the air, and shook him there, and bellowed at him, “Look, look, look!” and then cast him on his feet and shook him again, and

flung him to the ground and picked him up again, and laughed and jabbered and growled.

All at once a dense cloud, heavy with rain, swept across the disc of the moon, and a blackness of great darkness fell upon the lane.

“Joe,” moaned the horrified preacher, “let me alone! you are mad!”

“Mad!” answered the other. “And who was it drove me mad, eh? Answer me that. Who ruined the happiness of a quiet, diligent man, and shattered for ever his hopes in this world, and maybe in another? Who would not let another work steadily when himself was idle? Who half-murdered another better than himself, and is unpunished, eh? I will tell you this, Grover; I have waited and prayed for the chance of meeting you, as I meet you now. I have waited and prayed, knowing that the time would come when you and I should stand

face to face, and I should be able to pay you for the wrongs I have received of you."

A groan from Richard.

"Ay! groan if you like, it's many thousand groans you've cost me."

"Joe! spare me, for mercy's sake!"

"Did you spare me? Do you remember that case, the broken glass, the rusty nails, the powder, the vitriol? Do you think there was mercy in that? And now this night, were you ready to spare one poor little girl, a moment since? I tell you, if I'd been inclined to show mercy and to spare, a while ago, I've no thought of doing either now that I have caught you at your villanies again. Look there!" he thrust the man-monkey towards a heap of large prongs and blocks of vitreous slag at the side of the road, waiting to be broken up and strewn.

"Can you make out that? That is to be your bed. A nice bed that. How do you

like the thoughts of sleeping there? I might have done something less, but you've put the sum and crown to your wickedness by touching HER." Again, and furiously, he shook the wretch.

"Remember the case! Remember the vitriol—and the nails!" Suddenly he heaved Grover above his head, and held him there, writhing like a hideous spider, then he cast him with all his force on the snags of dross.

Martha was returning from the errand on which she had been sent, when she happened to meet a girl with whom she was acquainted.

"Eh, Martha, where art t' boune to?"

"I'm boune home, lass, as fast as I can."

"Thou'st not been there wi' Annis."

"Nay, I've been after some yeast for mother, down to Bessy Fawcett."

"I met thy Annis, none so varry long sin.

I reckon she were after her young man, thou knows."

"You're mista'en, Polly."

"Nay, I'm not ; she were i' grand fettle, wi' all her Sunday clothes on. She were going along t' road to Askroyd."

"Art thou sure?"

"I'm very sure, there was Ellen Smith saw her too."

"It's strange, is that," mused Martha. Then turning to the girl, she said: "Good neet, lass!"

"Good neet to thee."

Then Martha went on. She was vexed to think that Annis had gone off without telling her, and that by letting herself be seen on the way to Hugh's house, she should give additional cause of scandal.

"I'll go after her," said Martha, striking up by a 'ginnel,' or narrow path between walls, into the Askroyd road. She found it

deserted as far as the diverging lanes. She went up the road to the Arkwrights' cottage, but saw no signs of her cousin. Then she returned to the fork, supposing that she should find her with Hugh walking in the old familiar Sandy-pit Lane.

She picked her way, by the moonlight, as well as possible over the stones, stumbling where the trees cast their pitch-black shadows, looking anxiously before her for her friend. She stood still and listened, without hearing any sound.

"I'll go no further," she said; "she cannot be here." Then, however, she changed her mind: "Nay, I'll just go to t' turning."

And at the turning she saw something straggling across the road. Her heart ceased beating.

"Who's there?" she asked in a shrill tone.

There was no answer.

“It’s a man, I’m sure,” she said; “mebbe he’s druffen (drunk).”

What she saw was two long arms stretched out in the glittering moonlight, and two huge hands, which had grabbed at the soil, but stiffened in the act; less distinctly, because the shadow of a tree fell there, did she make out a heap like a human body, to which the arms belonged, and a drooping head on the pile of iron dross.

Timidly, with bated breath, she stole up to it. Then she distinguished a pair of short legs, one extended at full length, the other with the knee up, and the foot on a large glazed block. She could see the white line of the stocking between the trousers and the boots. Creeping further, she saw the head slung back over a rib of stone, the eyes and mouth wide open, the face inverted as she looked down on it.

She stooped, with the pulses in her temples throbbing violently, and her breath coming by jerks.

“It is Richard Grover,” she said to herself. Then aloud: “Mr. Grover!”

There was no answer.

“Mr. Grover!”

Still no answer.

Then she touched the head, and it swung in a manner strange to her. She put her hand to it to lift it, but was frightened and let go, it felt so heavy, and it dropped back like lead.

She fled up the lane, ran into the road, paused one moment at the junction, and turning towards Askroyd, made the best of her way to the house of her employer, the nearest human habitation.

She rang the front door bell violently, and stood trembling till the door was opened. Hugh, and his uncle and aunt, and Mr. and

Mrs. Jumbold, who were spending the evening with the Arkwrights, stood in the passage. They had rushed out to see what was the matter; a violent ring at the bell being a rare occurrence there at night, unless there was anything the matter at the mill.

“What is it?” asked Mr. Arkwright, anxiously.

“Oh, sir!” cried Martha, panting for breath; “oh, sir! come quick! there’s a dead man i’ t’ lane.” She waited for breath. “I think it’s Richard Grover, sir!” She paused again. “I fancy his neck’s broken.”

Yes, the man-monkey lay straggling over the vitreous prongs and hummocks, and over the road, with his neck snapped, and from his coat-pocket protruded the heading of a tract, legible in the moonlight:—

“JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ONLY.”

BOOK II.—FLAME.



CHAPTER I.

MR. FURNESS had been thirty years vicar of Sowden. He was now an old man, with hair nearly white. A small, slender man with a bright face, and a calmness of manner which spoke of peace within. He was unmarried; lived in an old-fashioned vicarage on the south side of the church, in the bright sun, with the door opening on the churchyard. The house was partly of stone, partly of brick, and destitute of the slightest architectural ornament. His predecessor had added to the original stone vicarage a

red-brick block of rooms, and Mr. Furness had thrown out in addition a long room for parish business, class, and choir meetings. The garden was a grass-plot, the grass exceedingly coarse and wiry, and the flower-beds empty of all but perennials. In it was a greenhouse containing vines, but the grapes seldom found their way to the vicar's table, being generally distributed among the sick poor. When Mr. Furness came to the parish, thirty years ago, there was no church-school; the church was in a ruinous condition, unwarmed, and deserted except of a few old people; dissent was flourishing, and Sowden was in the condition of a manufacturing place in which is no element of religion to season the lump.

The vicar was a man of good family, and had inherited valuable paintings and furniture. He sent furniture and paintings

to the auctioneer, and with the money thus raised, built his schools. Such furniture as was absolutely necessary he reserved, and family portraits he retained; the latter adorned his bedroom, the former was scantily spread over the whole house. Two rooms he occupied himself, two rooms he surrendered to the curate, and one to the schoolmaster, till a dwelling for the latter could be built.

The value of the living of Sowden was three hundred. One hundred went to the two curates, fifty was spent on the church and the poor, and one hundred and fifty the vicar reserved for the maintenance of his house, and his own requirements.

The services in the church were made more frequent and more attractive, not without the bitterest opposition. The dissenters, finding the Church becoming a living

spiritual agency, exerted their utmost endeavours to oppose the vicar in everything he undertook, and as the manufacturers and men of means in Sowden were all of the Methodist persuasion, he had to fight his battles single-handed, without money, in the face of odds which would have made most hearts fail. But he held on through contumely, slander, and poverty. Then came the great battle of the pews. Mr. Furness was convinced that the only chance of getting the Church to be regarded as a home by the people was to throw it completely open to rich and poor. The battle was fought, when a faculty was applied for, by a leading dissenter of fortune in the place, who claimed a pew in the parish church which he never occupied, but kept systematically locked. The legal expenses were great. Mr. Furness sold all his family silver and a cabinet of coins, to pay his lawyer. He gained the day, and from

the moment that the parish church was thrown open to all, the Church went forward conquering opposition, and establishing herself in the hearts of the people.

The re-pewing was not a work of a day. The forks and spoons and coins had gone into the pockets of the solicitors, and Mr. Furness rightly judged that the rest of the work was for the people themselves to do, and that they would execute it in proportion to their appreciation of the advantage derived from a free Church. The re-pewing was carried out in this manner.

The schools had been in operation many years before this new move was made ; and in them had been educated the present generation of workers in the numerous mills of Sowden. It is the custom of travellers when giving orders at any house, to tip the clerk, and other officials, not unhandsomely. Also, when visitors see over a manufactory,

the overlooker receives half a crown or five shillings. For some years a number of these clerks and overlookers, instead of appropriating this money to themselves, laid it aside for the re-pewing of the church, and the sum thus realized was so considerable that it paid in great measure for the execution of the new work.

Sowden parsonage was what a parsonage ought to be, and what one rarely is—a house open to all. No parishioner thought of ringing at the front door, but walked into the passage and tapped at the door of the vicar, or his curates, according as he wished to see the one or the other. If they were engaged, the visitor sat in the hall till the clergyman was disengaged. Of an evening it was not by any means exceptional to see all the chairs in the entrance passage occupied by mill-girls; some in their shawls, others “fettled up a bit,” and clerks and

men who worked all day in cloth manufactories, sitting or standing in some numbers, till they were admitted in turn to the vicar or his curates.

Among the mill-people there were religious societies formed, the vicar being chaplain to that of the men, and the senior curate to that of the women; these societies met once a month, or oftener, for discussion of religious topics of the day, and for prayer. They were subject to rules for the government of the lives of the members, and once a year assembled for a service and sermon special to them in the church, and then for a picnic among the hills. A perfect *entente cordiale* existed between the priest and his people. The former was careful not to interfere in other than spiritual matters; he exhibited his confidence in his flock, did not ask for deference and exact homage, and they gave him deference, homage, confidence,

love, and devotion, in good measure, pressed down, and running over; they flew to him in doubt and difficulty, following his advice, submitting with alacrity to his wishes, trusting him with confidence, and loving him with their whole hearts.

It is impossible to calculate the amount of good effected by this man. He was not what is generally called a powerful preacher; if he had been, he would have probably trusted to the pulpit rather than the closet. Sermons exert far less influence than people suppose, however eloquent the preacher, and excellent the discourse. Sermons are listened to as institute lectures are listened to, to while away a half-hour, which would otherwise be spent in ennui. What tells on the moral and spiritual character of the people is the private intercourse between the pastor and his flock, and that is a means for good not to be over-estimated.

The vicar of Sowden had it not in his power to purchase the poor. It is supposed by some that the Church can only hold her own by bribery and corruption ; and that the parish priest is of necessity a relieving officer. Pastoral visits cost many clergy a shilling a cottage, and begin with prayer, which is patiently endured by the poor person in expectation of the tip which follows the concluding amen. This course demoralizes the people, for to receive a charity self-respect has to be sacrificed. Mr. Furness was exceedingly cautious how he gave, and to whom he gave, charity. He rarely was the dispenser, he generally made some of the laity attend to the bodily necessities of the poor, whilst he confined himself to their spiritual requirements. Where he was satisfied that there was real want, he communicated the fact to his district visitors and well-to-do parishioners. The result of this

treatment was that the poor appeared to him in their true colours, and that the detestable hypocrisy which is encouraged all over England among the needy was discountenanced and stifled in the birth. It may be questioned whether the clergy of the Church of England are not, with the best possible intentions, and with the kindest hearts, doing an irreparable damage to the moral character of that class which is daily assuming greater power in the land, by their indiscriminate charity. Among the poor, that only is valued which costs them trouble and money. The sun, the moon, the stars, they do not charge for shining, they do not cost an hour's toil to make them burn ; but oh for the pig ! dear object of creation, dearer than all the host of heaven, exalted above stars and moon and sun. Sweet pig ! cherished pig ! Hast thou not consumed many stone of bran to fatten thee ! Hast thou

not cost much labour in cleaning out thy sty ! Perish sun, moon, and stars ; God save the pig ! Mr. Furness never forgot a bit of advice given him by a rough, long-headed operative, thirty years ago, when he first came into the parish :

“ I tell thee, if thou’rt boun to mak’ folks chu’ch, thou mun mak’ em pay for ’t, and thou mun mak’ em work for ’t.”

And, carried out on this principle, there was not in the end a more popular, active and energizing power in the district than the parish church. Savings-bank, night-schools, choir, committees for this and societies for that, kept the young men in constant employ ; the girls washed and cleaned the church, worked for bazaars, taught in night and Sunday-schools, made decorations, and were never without something to do, never expecting the least remuneration, and generally working at cost of time, labour, and

money to themselves. And these young people were, for the most part, factory-hands.

Annis, when she fled from the man-monkey, instead of returning to Mrs. Rhodes, went straight to the parsonage. She was hurt at the trick which had been played upon her; the deception she could not forgive, certainly not forget. If she had been resolved before to leave the place, she was now determined to leave it at once. Her only relative there had behaved to her with treachery, and she could no longer trust her. The poor girl was so troubled and uncertain how to act, that she went where she knew she would meet with sympathy, advice, and support. She opened the vicarage door, passed through the gas-lit hall, and tapped at the vicar's room door.

“Come in.”

Annis walked in. Who ever entered, at

whatever time, found Mr. Furness writing letters, with his spectacles on his nose, a cabinet of correspondence answered and unanswered before him, a clock with a noisy tick and a harsh tingle at the hour, above his head, and surplice and stole on a peg beneath it.

“Well Annis, my child,” he said, looking up, and signing a letter.

“Sit down there, near the fire. Let me seal up and direct this envelope, and I shall be at your service.”

One of the vicar’s remaining luxuries was a bunch of seals which had belonged to his father, and, perhaps, his grandfather. They were engraved gems of antique workmanship, set in gold ; one of them bore his arms, and with that he generally impressed his wax, as more appropriate than a Venus, or a Cupid and Psyche.

“Now then,” he said, jumping up, twist-

ing his chair round to the fire, and reseating himself. He was a gentleman of the old school, courtly and polite in his manners, perfectly able to be familiar and agreeable to any one, without in the slightest degree losing his dignity. When he went out, he wore a neat black dress-coat, and a very good hat; when he sat at home, he was in his cassock,—partly, no doubt, to save his coat-sleeves.

“Now, Annis,” he said, with a smile, “I have been wanting to see you for a few days, but you did not pop in; you have had other things to think of, poor little heart!”

“Please, sir,” Annis said, simply, “I wish to speak to you very much.”

“Well, what about? you have caught me quite disengaged.”

“You’ve heard about——” she hesitated.

“Yes, I have heard about your love affair, if you mean that.”

Annis nodded.

“And you want my advice as to what had better be done?”

“Oh, Mr. Furness! I’m boune to leave.”

“What! to go away from Sowden?”

“Yes, sir.”

“I think that is decidedly the best thing you can do. When are you going?”

“Please, sir, I don’t know. I’d like to go soon.”

“The sooner the better. Now, tell me. Have you made up your mind to give up Hugh?”

Annis’s fingers worked uneasily at the creases of her gown: she said, after a while, very low,

“I must try.”

“Yes, you must try. As things are at present, you cannot be Hugh’s wife. That is quite impossible. I have seen Hugh, and have had a talk with him.”

Annis looked up sharply in the old man's face. Her lips quivered, and the light flickered in her eyes, as she asked, faintly :

“Did he say he would give me up?”

“No, Annis, I am bound to say that he did not. But what can he do? He is dependent on his uncle, who will cast him adrift if he marries you, and if you were his, you would not be able to assume the position which would be required of you. Annis, you would drag him down, and that you must have courage not to do.”

“I cannot forget him.”

“I do not suppose you can, but you may learn to be happy, with only the remembrance of the past. Have you never loved any one else before Hugh?”

“No, no, none; and I can love no other.”

“Sometimes,” said the vicar, “these sudden and strange affections are only the

result of fancy, last a little while, and then fade away. Sometimes they come of God, and then they last. If you and Hugh are parted for a few years, you will both be able to realize whether the love you now feel for one another be fancy or real, lasting union of heart. If it is fleeting, you and he will always be thankful that you were saved from acting in a headstrong manner, on passion, a course which would have embittered after life."

"Oh, please Mr. Furness," she said, sadly and slowly, "I think my life about like to be as bitter as gall, with never seeing him no more. It is just like having to live in a cellar, and never get a peep o' sun, or be in prison, and never have no hope of being free."

"There is no reason why you should not have some hope," the vicar said, kindly and gravely. Annis looked in his face, and

brightened. "You may be sure, my little girl, that this will lead to good."

"That's what mother said of everything that happened."

"Leave Sowden, and do your best to make yourself worthy of Hugh,—stay, worthy is not the right expression, that I hope and believe you are already, but I mean fit,—fit, that is, to be his companion. Go and improve yourself, get instruction, allow your mind to be developed, your habits to be moulded; do not set Hugh ever before you as the aim and object of your life, because, if you do, he may disappoint you, and destroy your happiness for ever; but let yourself be educated and trained, trusting the future entirely in God's hands. If, in after years, Hugh finds you a meet companion for himself, if his affection for you has lasted unimpaired, and your heart has remained true to him, then,

never fear, God will bring you together again. But if, after a while, he changes his mind, and you cease to care for him, no harm is done, education is never thrown away."

Annis was trembling with eagerness and delight. A future was open to her, and hope revived.

"Oh, Mr. Furness! where can I go? I was thinking of seeking my mother's brother, at Keighley; he's a farmer."

"No, Annis, you must not go there. Hugh would find you out directly. You must go where he will not know of you. You must be a brave, good, true little girl, as I am sure you are, and keep quite away from him, lest you ruin his prospects with his uncle."

"I'd die, rather than that."

"Well, you must promise me to hold no communication with any one here till I give

you leave, and not to tell any one here where you are."

"Yes, sir, I will promise."

"Then you shall go to my sister at York; sit still, and I will give you a note."

He twisted his chair round to the table again, and wrote a letter to Miss Furness.

"DEAR BESSIE,

"I send you a nice little girl, an orphan, to take care of, instruct, clothe, feed, and bring up in her duty to God and man. In return, she will wait on mother and you, and make herself generally useful. A young gentleman here, of education and good character, has lost his head to her, and I think the poor little body has lost head and heart to him in return. Of course I must do what I can to stop this, or rather, direct it. Bessie, you see to her. If they forget one another, well and good. If God

has joined them in heaven, man must not put them asunder, and your kind offices to the girl will have smoothed the way to the final pleasant settlement. Give dear mother my love, &c."

"Here is the note, Annis," he said, when he had directed it; "show it to no one in Sowden, lest it should be known whither you are going."

"When am I to go, sir?"

"As soon as you possibly can."

"And I may think of Hugh?"

"I do not say that, Annis. What I will say, is this. Make the most of those opportunities which are afforded you of improving your mind, manners, speech, and so on. Take my sister as a model, and endeavour to form yourself on her type; she is a good woman, and a perfect lady. Whatever may happen, it can never have been amiss that

you should have copied a good exemplar. Leave the future entirely in God's hands. Trust Him. If He thinks best that you and Hugh should see one another no more, it will be for your mutual advantage, but if He wills that you should make one another happy, He will find means of bringing you together again."

There was a hasty rap at the door.

"Come in."

And Hugh entered the room.

The moment he saw Annis he sprang towards her, and caught her hands in his, and looked into the bright, dazzling, uplifted eyes, perfectly oblivious of his purpose in entering the vicarage. He saw neither Mr. Furness, nor his room; he saw Annis alone, and in that moment also the girl's soul leaped up into her eyes, filling them with brightness, like the sudden illumination of dark windows.

The vicar looked at them, gravely smiling.

“ Well, Mr. Hugh Arkwright,” he said.

“ I really beg your pardon, sir,” the young man answered, starting, and letting go one of Annis’s hands, but keeping firm hold of the other.

“ Nay, no pardon is needed,” said Mr. Furness. “ It is very well that you are here to take leave of Annis. She is going away from you, and you will not see her again for years.”

Hugh’s countenance saddened ; he pressed the little hand he held, and looked down at the girl by his side.

“ Yes, Hugh,” the vicar continued. “ And now listen to what I am going to say. The love of two hearts for one another is a very sacred and solemn thing. It is enduring, true, patient ; it suffereth long and is kind ; it doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh

no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth. It is an earthly reflection of that Divine charity of which the apostle speaks. But there is a false love which is often mistaken for that which is true—a love which is but for a while, growing up but having no root and no depth of soil, and therefore withering speedily away. If you two love one another really, then God forbid that you should not be united according to his law. But this love must be proved. When you are far removed from one another, when you are tempted and tried, you will be able to ascertain for your own selves whether you have the all-bearing, all-believing, all-hoping, all-enduring, never-failing love, or only the fictitious passion which lasts but for a day. Take now that step which you know is right. It is right for you, Hugh, to stick to your business, it is right for you,

Annis, to go away from Sowden, and it is right for you both to leave the future entirely in the hands of God."

Then he left the room for ten minutes.

For the greater part of the while neither spoke. Perhaps their hearts were too full, perhaps in mutual love there is an internal voice which speaks and answers, without requiring the lips to form the words. But at last Hugh said, holding the little head to his shoulder, and with his voice scarce raised above a whisper :

"What letter is that in your hand, Annis?"

"It is one for the place to which I am going, dear."

"Put it in your pocket lest I see the address."

She looked up at him, and said :

"If you were to see it you would not follow me, I know."

“No, Annis, I would not.”

Then she put her arms round his neck, and kissed him.

Mr. Furness came in.

“Well, Hugh,” said the vicar, “what did you come here to see me about? You had not tracked this poor lassie down, I hope?”

“No, sir, I came to tell you a startling bit of news; and in the excitement of seeing my little girl here, I quite forgot it; but it is no matter, nothing could be done.”

“What is it, Hugh?”

“That man-monkey fellow——”

Annis started.

“That man-monkey who has been preaching here, you know, has been found dead in the lane leading to the sand-pit; his neck is broken.”

“Good heaven !”

Annis turned white and faint; her large

eyes gleamed with horror on Hugh's face as he told the vicar the circumstances.

"He was found lying on a heap of slag. Martha Rhodes was the one to discover him. He was still warm when we moved him to our house, where he is now lying ; but life is quite extinct."

"How did this happen?"

"I am sure I don't know," answered Hugh. "Probably the man was drunk, and tumbled over the heap in the dark : those piles of sharp glassy fragments are awkward things to light on, or he may have been getting over the hedge, and jumped into the road, as he thought, and tripped upon the blocks."

"Then there is no suspicion of foul play?"

"I should think not ; but, you see, the thing has only just happened. There can be no one in the place who bore sufficient

ill-will to the wretched creature to kill him, unless it were you, vicar."

Mr. Furness smiled.

"As to that, I can prove an *alibi*; for Annis here has been with me." Then more seriously, "No, it must have been an accident."

"I came to tell you," said Hugh, "as I thought you might like to know, though, as the man is dead, nothing can be done." Then turning to Annis, he said, "You look frightened."

She shuddered, and averted her white face. She shrank from her thoughts. She remembered Joe Earnshaw catching the man in his powerful grasp, and shouting to her to run. Had there been a struggle between these two men, and had it ended in the death of her tormentor? Probably Richard Grover had been killed unintentionally; but it must have been in the watchman's attempt to

save her that the man-monkey had been killed. Annis knew of no motive which could have impelled Earnshaw to commit murder. The watchman had saved her; she felt it was her duty to screen him by keeping silence.

“Please, sir,” said Annis to the vicar, “I think I must be going.”

“Indeed, yes, it is getting late,” he answered.

Hugh stepped forward, and said :

“I may see her home, as it is to be the last time for some years, may I not?”

Mr. Furness hesitated. On consideration he remembered that it was not many yards to the Rhodes’s house, and that Annis was evidently frightened by the account of the death of Grover, so he said, “Yes, and then come back to me.”

“Very well, sir;” and they went out.

When Annis was at the parsonage door

she stopped, looked up at Hugh timidly, and said :

“Is there a train Normanton way to-night?”

“Yes, at five minutes to ten.”

“I will go by it.”

“What!”

“Hugh, dear, I will not go back to the Rhodes’s no more. I’ll go away at once.”

“Nonsense; stay the night at your cousin’s, and go to-morrow.”

“I will go to-night, it is better,” she said. Then pleadingly, “Will you come to the station with me, and see me off?”

“Yes, that I will; but——”

“Nay, I’m set on it. Now, Hugh, when I’m off, just go to the parsonage, and tell Mr. Furness, and then he’ll let Mrs. Rhodes know, or they’ll be seeking me.”

“Very well.”

He saw her to the station, but did not

volunteer to take her ticket for her; and she left, without his knowing for what station she was booked. She was on her way to York, whilst he was toiling sadly up the hill towards Sowden.

Suddenly, a hand was laid on his shoulder. He turned round, and saw a dark figure with a slouched billycock, and a comforter over his chin. The road was lighted at long intervals by gas-lamps. He could distinguish sufficient of the man by the light from the nearest lamp to feel convinced that the figure was that of Earnshaw.

“What do you want?” he asked.

“Where is she sent to?”

“Who are you speaking of?”

The watchman stamped, shook the lantern in his hand violently, and growled furiously:

“You know. Where have you sent her to? How long before she comes back?”

Hugh doubted what to answer.

“Do you think I did not see you?” said the watchman. “Eh, I watched you on the platform putting her into the carriage. Where have you sent her to?”

“I cannot tell.”

“When will she be back?”

“Perhaps never.”

A growl like that of a wild beast issued from the throat of Earnshaw.

“Answer! When is she coming back?”

“I tell you, Joe,” Hugh replied, firmly, “she is not coming back at all; she has left Sowden till”—he raised himself—“till I bring her here as my wife.”

The great frame of the watchman rocked with passion.

“Where have you sent her to?”

“Whither she is gone I do not know, nor will any one in Sowden know, excepting one.”

“ Yourself?”

“ No, not myself.”

“ It’s a d——d lie.”

Hugh raised his hand to strike, but instantly lowered it again; he would not add a blow to that fearfully-maimed face.

“ It is perfectly true,” he said, composedly.

“ Do you remember,” muttered the furious man, and as he spoke bubbles foamed, and were spluttered from his lips—“ do you remember what I said ?”

“ I forget,” said Hugh, turning away. The watchman caught him by the arms, mumbling and muttering, and crouching as a tiger about to leap on his prey.

“ Let me go!” Hugh exclaimed, struggling to release his arms, but struggling in vain. In the tussle the man’s hat fell off; and by the lamplight Hugh saw the wild blazing eyes glaring at him, with the ferocity of madness.

“Do you remember?” with a mocking laugh.

Then there burst on his ear a tramp of feet, accompanying a loud and measured strain :—

“Have you not succeeded yet?
 Try, try again :
 Mercy’s door is open set,
 Try, try again.
 Yours is not a single case,
 Others have the same to face ;
 If you’d gain your proper place,
 Try, try again !”

It was the hymn of a Glory Band beating up recruits for Paradise. In a moment Hugh and the watchman were in the midst of a number of men intoxicated with spiritual excitement, pulling at them, screaming in their ears, and dancing around them with frenzied vehemence. Hugh struck out left and right with his fists, fought his way through them, and fled up the hill to Sowden, leaving the disconcerted rout to form line

again and rush down hill after the watchman,
roaring at the top of their voices :—

“Have you not succeeded yet ?

Try, try again :

Mercy’s door is open set,

Try, try again !”

CHAPTER II.

DIRECTLY that Mr. Furness heard of Annis's abrupt departure, he went to the house of John Rhodes and communicated to him the fact, saying that he had found her a situation where she would be comfortable, but deemed it advisable not to let any one know where this was, lest it should reach Hugh Arkwright's ears. He said that her precipitate departure had somewhat surprised him, but that he hoped to hear of her safe arrival by an early post. John Rhodes was quite satisfied. Mr. Arkwright had told him the girl must go elsewhere for a while, and Mrs. Rhodes was more than satisfied, for she had been in a condition of confusion and terror

ever since she heard of the death of the man-monkey, lest it should transpire that she had sent Annis to meet him in the lane that very night. She was only too well aware that gossips would impute to her evil motives. She was perplexed at Annis's non-return, and in no little trepidation, till Mr. Furness came in, and his statement that she had been with him for some while that evening greatly relieved her. Evidently the girl had not been to Sandy-pit Lane at all.

The inquest on the body was held at the tavern whose sign was "The Spotted Dog." It excited unusual interest, and the room was crowded. Martha Rhodes had to give evidence, and this evidence was curious, for, though perfectly true, it led the coroner and jury to an entirely wrong finding.

"What is your name?"

"Martha Rhodes."

"What is your profession?"

“I make up.”

“In whose mill?”

“Arkwright’s.”

“You found the deceased on Friday night, I understand?”

“Ay, I found him.”

“Be so good as to narrate the circumstances.”

“Why, thou sees, I went down t’ lane about half after eight, I reckon, but I’m not very sure, for I didn’t notice time partick’ler, and there I found Richard Grover.”

“I should like to know where you live?”

“I’ Kirkgate.”

“Then, what took you into Sandy-pit Lane at that time of night?”

“That’s just nowt to thee.”

“Yes, it is. I must trouble you to tell me.”

“Weel, I were seeking some ’un.”

“The deceased?”

“Nay!” with ineffable scorn. “As if I’d go seek a Ranter parson!”

This exclamation produced laughter through the room, and one or two men who knew the girl’s strong predilections for Church, clapped, and said, “That’s Martha all over.”

“You have no love for that ilk,” said the coroner, who saw which way the wind lay, and was fond of a joke.

Martha looked her answer.

“You are not fond of Ranter parsons, then?” continued the coroner, pressing the point.

“I’ve seen ower much on ’em,” answered Martha.

Another general laugh.

“You’d not be sorry to see them all dead?”

“Happen I’d get ower it.”

“Perhaps you killed this man,” said the

coroner, convulsing the whole assembly by this sally.

“If you’ve done wi’ me, I’ll be off,” Martha observed; “I’m not going to be made game of.”

“Order!” shouted the coroner, rapping the table; and silence was produced. “Now, girl, I insist on knowing whom you went to meet, by night, in Sandy-pit Lane.”

“I didn’t go to meet nobody.

“You said you did.”

“Nay, I said I went seeking some un.”

“Other than the deceased?”

“Ay.”

“Of course, a sweetheart?”

Martha looked the coroner straight in the face, and said :

“Do you think I’d run after a man? They ain’t so precious as all that, I reckon.”

Laughter, and thunders of applause. Martha spoke calmly, without boldness.

“Silence, order there!” from the coroner.

“Then it was not a sweetheart?”

“I han’t got one.”

“Was it a man you were seeking?”

“It was not a man.”

“Who was it then?”

“I went seeking my cousin, Annis Greenwell.”

“What made you seek her in that lane?”

“Well, I’ll tell you,” said Martha; “mother sent me down to owd Bessy Fawcett for a sup o’ yeast, and I met Mary Brierly, and she told me she’d seen our Annis taking along t’ Askroyd road. I were a bit mazed to think she was there, and I went after her.”

“Stay, you went down the lane?”

“Why, thou sees t’ road is like a letter Y, there’s a long bit o’ road as goes into Sowden, then there comes a branch, and one road goes off to Askroyd, and t’ other leads down to t’

sand-pit. But they call all t' road, as far as to t' fork and lane that's along by t' right, Askroyd road. And just afore you come to t' branch there's a bit o' a lane runs down t' hill to t' station and milns. That's to t' left hand, afore you turn down Sandy-pit Lane. Weel, I came along t' road, and I went up right hand turning, that's t' Askroyd road, thou knows, and I didn't see her noways, so then I went back, and I ran a bit down t' lane at left hand, that's Sandy-pit Lane, thou sees, and there I fund t' man-monkey."

"Did you see no signs of any other human being?"

"Nay, there were no one there. It were as still as owt."

"And where, then, was your cousin? She must have been on one road or the other."

"You're out there," answered Martha; and here she made a mistake, which led to the wrong finding by the jury. "She hadn't

been along neither one nor t'other, for she'd gone down to t' station by t' little way on t' left hand I told thee of."

"What was she going to the station for?"

"She wor goin' by t' train. She'd gotten a situation, and wor off that neet. But she'd told me nowt about it, so I didn't know. I knowed she were going, but I didn't know she were boun to flit that neet."

Annis had acted on that mysterious feminine instinct which takes in her sex the place of reason, when she resolved that night on leaving Sowden at once. By so doing she saved Joe Earnshaw. Had she remained, Martha could not have fallen into this mistake; the coroner would have questioned Annis, when he had learned from her cousin that she had been in or about that lane, and then Annis could not have withheld, in cross-examination, the fact that the night-watch

had grappled with the man monkey, and that she had left them struggling with one another on the spot where, a few minutes later, the corpse was found.

Mr. Jumbold, the surgeon, having viewed and examined the deceased immediately after its removal to the house of Mr. Arkwright, was examined, and gave his opinion that the fracture of the spinal cord might have been the result of accident. He believed that the injuries which had been observed on the deceased might have been caused by the deceased falling backward on the heap. On being asked whether he thought a man ascending the pile of vitreous slag, and slipping, could break his neck, he replied that it was not only possible but probable, especially if he fell backward instead of forward. The deceased had been found lying on his back. There were wounds and bruises on other portions of his body, but all behind. Mr

Jumbold believed these were caused by the fall. The deceased was a heavy man, and a backward fall was always severe, as the arms could not be employed to arrest it. When asked whether he thought the deceased was in liquor at the time of the accident, the surgeon replied that he had no doubt he was so ; there was a smell of gin about the mouth when he examined the corpse, and the saliva on the stones bore a faint odour of that spirit. It was ascertained that no suspicion rested on any one of having borne ill-will against Richard Grover, who was a stranger in the neighbourhood, and not likely to have made enemies. Money was found in his pocket, his watch and chain were undisturbed ; so that no theft had been committed.

Finally, a unanimous decision was arrived at, that the death was accidental, which was about as near the truth as are the majority of coroner's findings.

Richard Grover was buried in the chapel grave-yard ; the occasion was improved, and the man-monkey was canonized, the preacher observing the suitability of the last hymn sung by the departed saint :

“I am coming, I am coming
Unto Zion, unto Zion,
Faster, faster, faster, faster!”

“Indeed,” said the eloquent panegyricist, “he went there a deal faster than ever he reckoned he would. Solemn thought! those words—so full of hope, of courage, of assurance—may have been the last—mark me! O Christian brethren!—the very last uttered by lips which were to open again in heaven to sing the song with angels.” This is quoted, to show how dangerous it is for people to make these sort of rash suppositions.

If these had been the last words of the blessed saint and elect servant, the coinci-

dence would have been curious ; but as a fact they were not ; for after having sung that song—hymn, we mean—he had asked for gin at the “ Peal of Bells,” on Askroyd road, and the last words actually spoken by this vessel of glory ere he spread his wings for realms of light were these, the religious tendency of which are unmistakable : “ I’m damned !” uttered in the gripe of his murderer.

CHAPTER III.

ANNIS reached York in the small hours of the morning. The sky was beginning to whiten in the east, and the Minster towers to stand out darkly cutting the wan sky. She left the station, and crossed the new iron bridge, supposed to add beauty to the old city, but actually disfiguring it with its coarse and vulgar affectation of Gothic. The streets were deserted. She wandered round the Minster, then sat down on the flight of steps leading to the south transept door, and waited, counting the quarters as they tingled on the tower bell.

Hungry and chilled, she rose at last, and strolled along Coney Street. A few sleepy

servant-girls appeared at the doors and windows. A policeman stood impatiently waiting the hour of his release from the arduous task of doing nothing ; a market-gardener's cart rattled along the pavement.

The Minster clock struck seven, whereupon that of St. Sampson's said seven with *empressement*, and that of All Saints added its assurance that seven was the hour ; with a flutter St. Michael's suggested seven ; seven said St. Mary's with decision ; whereupon St. Olave's, St. Saviour's, and St. Cuthbert's spoke together, making such a jingle that it was difficult to discover their opinions.

Now when all the church clocks had said their say, a little tingling clock in a baker's shop added its testimony ; that in a neighbouring grocer's was not much behindhand ; and the assertion that the hour was seven came in muffled tinks from several areas.

Annis entered a baker's shop, and bought

a couple of biscuits, which she ate in the shop; then she looked at the direction on the letter given her by Mr. Furness, and asked her way. The baker's girl who had served her, good-naturedly accompanied her down the street, and pointed out to her the proper turning, giving her at the same time directions only comprehensible by those perfectly familiar with York. After advancing a little way, Annis went astray, but was put right by a newspaper-boy. After a few divergencies from the direct course, she reached the house occupied by Miss Furness, and, as the clocks struck eight, she rapped at the door.

The lady had not as yet left her bedroom, so Annis waited in the little breakfast chamber. There was much therein to arrest her attention and amuse her till Miss Furness appeared. It resembled a museum. A japanned cabinet against the wall was sur-

mounted by a case of humming-birds of the most brilliant colouring; on the chimney-piece were nondescript ornaments in soap-stone from Penang; against the wall were suspended Chinese hats and shoes; between the windows was an Esquimaux canoe; on a bracket against the chimney was the most hideous and grotesque idol from a New Zealand paah. Annis had observed in the passage stuffed sun-fish, sharks, walrus' teeth, corals, Indian weapons, and bottled sea-mice.

Annis had sent Mr. Furness's note up to his sister in her room, and a message had come to her to wait in the breakfast apartment and that Miss Bessie would be down in ten minutes. Annis prowled about the room, wondering over the curiosities displayed at every turn, and longing to know all about them. In after-times, when she was settled into the house, they formed

an inexhaustible store of interest and delight to her. She had hitherto regarded the glass walking-stick, which her mother had so persistently cherished as the *ne plus ultra* of curiosities, but what was a glass walking-stick to a tomahawk which had scalped living men—to a mandarin who wagged his head, rolled his eyes, and protruded his tongue, and had been made in China—or to a saw-fish which could actually sink a vessel with a thrust of its nose!

How had Miss Furness become possessed of all these objects? When quite a child she had formed a childish attachment to a young midshipman in his Majesty's, William IV.'s, navy. When the midshipman became a lieutenant he visited the family pretty frequently, and asked Bessie to be his wife. She was then twenty-one. She was left by her father in charge of her mother, and she refused the sailor. Though

she refused him she loved him, truly, tenderly, devotedly. None knew how she had sat hour by hour at her window hoping to see the light-haired, tall, open-faced officer come towards her door. But duty was dearer to Miss Furness than her own wishes, and she sacrificed herself to her sense of duty. Her mother was a sacred charge which she must not neglect.

After a voyage round the world, and an absence of three years, one morning the silver poplar,—as the lieutenant was called by those who knew him, from his light hair and height,—appeared again before Elizabeth Furness, and again did he ask her to be his. She replied that as long as her mother lived she could not leave her.

“Let her home be with us,” pleaded the silver poplar; but Bessie shook her head. She knew that with marriage came other interests and cares, and that her whole

attention would not be directed to her mother.

“I will not conceal from you that I love you,” she said; “but, William, whilst my mother is on earth I must devote myself to her comfort alone.”

“Well, Bessie,” the sailor said, “then we will wait.”

Years passed, and he came again, this time as captain, to seek his wife. Elizabeth Furness was still unmarried, still carefully watching and waiting on her mother. There was a whiter silver in the poplar’s hair, and there was grey in that of Bessie.

“We must wait a little longer,” and he sighed.

He came again, and found her quietly, dutifully, patiently, attending on her mother. Her hair was grey, and there were the furrows of age on her brow.

Once more the silver poplar came for his

Bessie, truly silver now, with glittering white hair, and a beautiful old face, full of the light of an honourable, brave, and humble spirit; he was an admiral when he came that last time. Bessie was, as of yore, with intense devotion, cherishing Mrs. Furness, now in her second childhood, an old woman of eighty. Bessie could not be his yet.

“I will come once more for you, and take no refusal then,” said the silver poplar, holding her hand as he parted from her. She did not see him again; he died on the blue seas, leaving the loved one of his life his collection of curiosities gathered by him from all parts of the globe, with intention of therewith ornamenting and furnishing his house when Bessie became his wife. Each of these articles had been purchased and laid by with this one object, and now he left them to her, along with his sword and uniform, his quadrant and sextant, and

all the savings from his pay laid by for his marriage, the savings of many years of patient waiting, amounting to a considerable sum. Will he keep his promise and come again for his Bessie, when she can no more refuse to accompany him? We cannot tell.

Above the chimneypiece in her bedroom was a little medallion portrait on ivory of the silver poplar, with a high-collared blue coat, and a white waistcoat, and fair youthful face with clear skin and pure colour, with blue eyes, and a high head covered with very pale hair. It was a portrait of the young lieutenant as he came courting Bessie forty-five years ago. And under the black frame hung a decoration which the admiral had won and worn upon his breast, and bequeathed to her to whom he had been true in life and death, and who had never been other than true to him.

Miss Furness swept into the breakfast-room, in that soft, cool, noiseless manner belonging to some women; turning the handle quietly without letting it squeak, opening the door without its creaking, having descended the stairs without the banister rattling, and crossed the hall without her footfall sounding. Her entrance was like the breath of cool air wafted into a conservatory when the windows are thrown open. She was dressed in a silvery grey, matching with her hair; on her zone was a little autumnal rosebud of the delicate hue of her cheek. Every movement of Miss Furness was full of ease and grace. Her features were delicate and refined; she had been a very pretty girl, a handsome woman, and she was beautiful in her old age. It mattered little whether the nose and mouth were, from an artistic point of view, well moulded, for in looking in Bessie's face no one thought

of the features, but of the light and beauty of self-sacrifice which had glorified and perfected her. Patient continuance in well-doing, and hope deferred and never abandoned, exert a wondrous power in moulding and developing expression in the plainest face, an expression of unearthly beauty, to be discerned spiritually.

Miss Furness was very like her brother, not only in features, but in expression; their features they owed to common parents, their expression to a common schooling. Both had been trained in self-denial, self-devotion, and self-sacrifice. The brother had sacrificed his life to his parish, the sister hers to her mother. The best people in the world are least known. Mr. Furness was not spoken of out of his own immediate neighbourhood, nor Miss Furness beyond her own family. But there is a roll wherein their names are written, and there will dawn

a day when those who have been accounted last shall be first, and the first last.

When Miss Furness entered, she glided up to Annis with a beautiful welcoming smile on her bright face.

“My dear,” she said, “thank you for coming.”

Then she removed Annis’s bonnet with her own slender fingers, contemplating her kindly and reassuringly as she did so.

“My dear, you have come very early. When did you leave Sowden?”

“Please, miss, it was nigh eleven last night.” Annis spoke with perfect confidence. She felt, the moment she saw Elizabeth Furness, that she was not with a stranger.

“And when did you reach York?”

“About four o’clock this morning. We waited a very long while at Normanton.”

“Why, my poor little pet, what have you

been about these four hours since the train came in ?”

“I have been walking about York, miss ! I didn’t like to come earlier ; I fancied no one would be up.”

“And you have had no sleep ?”

“Yes, miss, I got a wink in the train.”

“Nothing to eat ?”

“I bought some biscuits in the baker’s shop.”

“Come along with me,” said Miss Furness. “Come to my room, and let me put you to rights and make you comfortable for breakfast. You shall have something to eat, and then you shall go to bed, and not get up till dinner-time.”

“Oh, Miss Furness !”

Elizabeth slipped her arm round her, and drew her lightly with her out of the room and up-stairs. There she made her wash her face and hands, smoothed her hair down

with her own comb and brush, dashed a little eau de Cologne over her brow to refresh her ; selected a little white rosebud from her nosegay on the toilette table, fastened it with her own fingers by the jet and crystal brooch to the girl's bosom, kissed her, telling her she was charming and looked quite fresh, and then brought her back into the breakfast-room.

Annis's childish heart began to overflow, and the tears to form in her eyes.

"Oh, Miss Furness," she said, "may I tell you all?"

"Not now ; I know a good deal from my brother's letter. My dear, sit down. I am going to fetch my mother, and then we shall have prayers and breakfast." So saying she slipped away, but put her head in again in a moment, asking : "Would you assist me, Annis? I cannot bring Mrs. Furness down without help."

Elizabeth knew that the best way to make a stranger feel comfortable and at home, was to find that person employment.

Of Mrs. Furness little need be said. She was, as has been already mentioned, in her second childhood. Second childhood!—old age, the infancy whose maturity is eternity.

She was a white-haired, clear-complexioned old lady, with a smile generally lighting up her face, with a sharp nose, rendered prominent by the absence of cartilage to her nostrils. This made necessary the insertion of small tubes into her nose when she slept, and these tubes were the constant worry of her life. She felt so much greater facility in breathing when these were inserted in her nostrils, that she was continually asking for them, and had to be diverted from wanting them by the ingenuity of her daughter, for the apparatus could only be used occasionally, lest it should fret the skin and

produce a sore. Mrs. Furness had lost her memory, to a considerable extent; she had not forgotten her son, nor did she forget those who were constantly about her, least of all did these “pipes,” as she termed them, drop from the chambers of her reminiscence; but she entirely forgot that she had asked for them ten minutes ago, and had been put off; she forgot the reasons alleged; she forgot whether she had taken her meals, and a quarter of an hour after dinner she would be wondering why the bell did not ring to announce that it was ready. She forgot that she had gone through the religious exercises of the morning ten minutes after their conclusion, and could not be satisfied unless they were recommenced, so that the morning was often spent in a succession of “Psalms and Lessons” for the day.

The constant attendance required by Mrs.

Furness was excessively trying to Elizabeth, and, of late, her loss of memory had greatly increased the labour, so that it had become necessary for Miss Furness to have some one whom she could trust to relieve her. At present she was with her mother night and day; she fed her twice during the night, and dressed her, read to her, and argued the question of the "pipes" throughout the day; cut up her food for her, took her out in a wheeled chair when the weather was fine, and remained in with her when it was inclement. If she left her mother for half an hour, to do some shopping, or make a call, or go to church, the old lady became restless, and exceedingly fretful and cross. The servants did not understand how to manage her, were rough or clumsy, and generally exasperated the aged woman, so as to render it difficult for her daughter to pacify her on her return.

Mr. Furness, having been told by his sister that she was in want of an assistant in the charge of attending to his mother, had sent Annis to her to occupy this post, one for which he considered the girl qualified, and one in which she would derive great benefit to herself.

When Miss Furness and Annis went upstairs, they found the old lady impressed with the idea that it was bed-time, and calling out for her daughter to unhook her gown behind.

“My dear mother,” said Elizabeth, “you have only just got up; you can’t go to bed again.”

“But I’ve my pipes in my nose,” protested Mrs. Furness.

“Yes, dear, because I have not taken them out yet.”

“But they are not taken out at night,” argued the old lady.

"It is not night now, dear, you know."

"Yes," retorted she, "I always have my pipes in at night, and I have them in now, so it must be night."

"I must remove them, however;" and Bessie extracted the apparatus, regardless of the old lady's remonstrances and struggles to retain it.

"They must be cleaned, you know, and oiled, and made all soft and nice for next time."

"I want my pipes!" wailed Mrs. Furness.

"Come along, darling mother; it is breakfast time."

"My pipes!"

"Annis!" said Miss Furness; "you take one arm and I will hold the other. Let her lean on you, and take care she does not slip in descending the stairs."

At breakfast the old woman had fancies about first one thing and then another.

The egg was stale, there was a young bird in it, and Miss Furness had to smell it, and assure her mother that it was quite fresh. The tea was too strong; there was green in it, the good lady thought, and she could not bear green — it affected her nerves. Bessie very patiently produced the tea-caddy, and showed her mother that the compartment for green tea was empty. Then, suddenly, Mrs. Furness insisted upon being set upon her feet, and after having been so placed, she very solemnly said: “For these and all His other mercies,” and then subsided into her chair again. “You forgot to say grace before we began,” was her rebuke. Bessie had not forgotten, but she did not tell her mother so.

Presently a crumb went down the wrong way, and the old lady coughed, and had to be slapped on her back. Then she upset her cup of tea on her lap, and her daughter

was obliged very carefully to wipe her mother's black silk dress, lest it should be stained.

Five times during the meal was Bessie asked, in a whisper, who Annis was. Not once, however, were the nasal tubes referred to, to the indescribable relief of Miss Furness.

When breakfast was over, Annis was taken to bed.

"Where is your box, my dear?" asked Elizabeth Furness.

Annis explained that she had come away in a hurry from Sowden without it.

"Never mind, I will write to my brother by to-day's post, and ask him to forward it. Meanwhile, I will lend you what you may want."

"She undressed the little girl herself, put her to bed, like a child, drew the sheets about her head, then shut the shutters and

closed the curtains, darkening the room to a dull twilight. Then she glided to the side of Annis, bowed over her, put a hand on each temple, and said, in a low, dove-like tone, with her soft eyes distilling love and compassion :

“Sleep soundly, poor little heart! and do not think over your troubles. God will order all things as He sees best. Kiss me, and promise me not to rise till I call you.”

Annis folded her arms round the old maid's neck and kissed her, and promised as required. Then Miss Furness stole from the room, shut the door, and left Annis in stillness as that of night.

She soon fell asleep, and did not awake till noon, when she opened her eyes on a grey figure standing by her, smiling brightly upon her. Bessie, seeing she was awake, moved to the window, and let in on her the golden mid-day sun.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE can be little doubt that the line adopted by Mr. Furness in dealing with Hugh and Annis has greatly shocked the majority of readers. The vicar ought to have rebuked Hugh for having fallen in love with a poor mill-girl. He should have stood forth the champion of outraged society, and have clearly represented to him that an unequal match is a heinous crime in the sight of the world. He should have made him aware that society imperatively demands of a man who marries, that he should choose a partner who is his equal in birth, or, at least, is richly furnished with a golden dower. Society does not ask whether there

is mutual love, nor does it require that there shall be congruity of natures, and congeniality of souls; it does not expect the woman to be selected for her domestic virtues, certainly not for her moral qualifications.

All this ought to have been insisted on by the vicar. But of this he said nothing. He knew that the voices of society—very many, and very loud—would make themselves heard, and ring in Hugh's ears all day long; that his uncle would sound the loud note, and that the echoes would pass from mill to shop, and be repeated from the kitchen. On this point, therefore, he did not speak. Possibly he did not hold altogether with society.

Once, when a boy, he had been taken to the Surrey Gardens, and had there seen Mont Blanc illuminated with fireworks. He had strayed from the crowd which gazed, enthusiastic and applauding, on the

snowy slopes, and the icy spires lighted up with Bengal flames, and strontian fires, and ringing with the pops and snaps of squibs and crackers, and had made his way to the rear, where he had contemplated, with amazement and disgust, the bare canvas, the pulleys, the gaunt ribs, the smears of oil, the baulks shoring up the mountain, the concealed barrows, and picks, and levers, the planks on which stood greasy mechanics with fusees, exploding the rockets, and fire-pots, and Roman candles. As a priest he had been for thirty-five years behind the great white mountain of conventionalism, seeing its bones, and bolts, and framework, and the stitches which held together its rents, and he had observed the construction and apparatus which produced the most startling effects that gratified the open-mouthed public. He knew that the pure snow was only white lead, that the grim

rocks were but dabs of burnt sienna, that the prime ingredient of the coloured lights was brimstone, that the vivid lightning flashes were only ignited rosin dust, and that the thunderclaps were vibrating sheet-iron.

The vicar of Sowden had studied human nature. He knew that it was a law of the universe, that no force can be permanently checked. It may be directed, but it cannot be brought to a total standstill. It must either resume its course or produce ruin. If the smallest rill be blocked, it may appear to have ceased to flow, but in the end it will reassert its onward tendency, probably bursting the barrier, and producing desolation. The action of the pores may be impeded, but the result is fever, and perhaps death. The passions in man are forces as powerful as those of nature. Society is ever casting up embankments to hinder them

from taking their legitimate course, and is ever thereby producing stagnation or devastation. If they are to be directed to the use of mankind, and to the well-being of the world, the sluice of hope must be kept open, and they will remain sweet and flowing.

The vicar had to deal with facts. Society loves to cast a veil over facts, or to stamp them out. The vicar preferred recognizing and utilizing them. It was a fact that Hugh and Annis loved one another. In this he saw nothing opposed to the law of God and of nature, though it was repugnant to the law of conventionality. Society allows that such facts do occur as love beyond the limits of social position, but it likes its sentence against a union of those who thus love to be carried out at the expense of God's law. It will not tolerate legitimate union, but it will wink at that which is against the eternal principle of morality and honour.

Love is the master passion. It is a force which cannot be nullified, it must expend itself on something ; no barrier of human construction can stay it. The vicar knew that if he and Hugh's relations united in attempting to stifle the young man's passion, it would burst forth with an ungovernable violence in a lateral direction, and ruin him. It would either precipitate a marriage in opposition to his uncle's wishes, and to the destruction of his prospects in life, or it would lead to sin. By giving the young man and the girl a hope, though that hope was remote, he directed the power within each into health-giving channels. Hugh would apply himself with enthusiasm to his avocation, in hopes of acquiring a competency on which to marry, and Annis would labour with diligence to qualify herself for a position above that in which she was born. And by showing that he trusted the young

people, and that he sympathized with their romance, he made them desirous to prove themselves worthy of his confidence and sympathy. The vicar had learned by experience of the world how much evil and misery is caused by the ignorance of parents and guardians in their dealing with the young when attached to each other. He had seen marriages forced on where the hearts were engaged elsewhere, and these had resulted in the destruction of happiness and moral ruin. He had seen too much of the lightning, and heard too much of the thunder of society to dread either. He knew that neither could kill or seriously injure. He remembered the rosin dust and sheet iron.

It was probable that years of separation might render the young people indifferent to one another, or they might be thrown amongst others who would make them for-

getful of their first passion. Should they remain true and loyal to each other, then, the vicar thought, no harm had been done. He knew Annis well. He was convinced of her goodness, simplicity, and natural refinement. And Hugh he also well knew, and believed that he had courage and strength of character to face the rosin flashes, and listen unmoved to the roll of sheet-iron.

The following letter reached Mr. Furness by post on Monday morning :—

“DEAR WILLIAM,—

“I am so much obliged to you for sending me the little girl, Annis Greenwell ; I know that I shall be very fond of her. I like her little, fresh, dewy face already, and I can see that she is a good, truehearted child. I have not the least doubt that mother will take to her. Annis is evidently sympathetic, and not at all likely to be irri-

tated at the dear old lady's ways. She has come not a moment too soon: I do not think I could have gone on by myself much longer, as I am obliged to be in town occasionally, and none of the servants understand mother. Some indulge her with her nose-tubes to keep her quiet, and others worry her by their well-intentioned scoldings, and these she cannot bear. I wish you would come over to York and see us oftener; but I know what you will say—there are parish matters to attend to. Well, you are right, of course, dear brother. I have made a discovery—by reading any book to dear mother, she can be kept quiet. I read ‘*Les Misérables*’ to her last week, and she listened with great attention, solemnity, and patience, believing that she was undergoing the Psalms and Lessons for the day. Of course, William, I read the latter immediately after breakfast, but mamma forgot ten minutes after, and

asked for them with such pertinacity that I took up 'Les Miserables,' and found that it answered quite as well. Do you know, William, when I read about Monseigneur Bienvenu, I could not help thinking of you. If I had not known you I should have thought the character overdrawn. But though he resembles you in many points, in others he is unlike you: I do not think he possessed that knowledge of the world that you are gifted with, and, on the other hand, you are not as charitable, I should rather say, as injudiciously reckless as he was. I wished, when I read the book, that I could have lived with you, and kept house for you, like Mdlle. Baptistine, but God has seen fit otherwise.

“And now, brother, what about Annis? The poor little soul has poured out her story into my ear. I saw she could not rest till she had told me all, so I brought her into

my little dressing-room, and then she gave me her history—told in such a simple, candid way, that my heart quite dissolved within me. I am sure she is a very good girl, very natural, and free from all affectation and conceit. Her heart is evidently full of the Hugh she told me of. As she spoke to me, my mind ran back unconsciously to the dear old days when the Silver Poplar visited our house. I cannot tell whether with Annis her love is a transient feeling or not. I think when women love, they love for ever; at least, I am sure that when once my affections are engaged, I cannot divert them to another object; it is an impossibility, it would be a violation of my instincts, and I doubt not that what applies to me applies to my sex generally. As for time effecting a change in the feelings, that I do not believe in; my impression is that time only deepens their channel,

and thereby fixes the direction of their course into permanency. Of the young man I can say nothing, as I do not know him. Some men, I believe, are volatile, but others are not, as I am thankful to know.

“I have not had time to examine Annis on the amount of her knowledge, but I do not suppose it extends very far. I shall do my best by her ; by setting her to read to dear mother, and selecting suitable works for the purpose, I hope to develop her mind ; and it will be quite an amusement to me to help her on in other little matters.

“Please to send her box as soon as convenient, as she arrived without anything.

“I remain,

“Your affectionate sister,

“ELIZABETH FURNESS.”

Hugh, for some days, felt the discomfort

of being closely watched. When he went to the mill of a morning, he was aware of a figure loitering about the yard. The same person was there when he left at night. Once or twice he saw him waylaying him in the lane leading up the hill, and if he had not been in company with Mr. Arkwright, an unpleasant meeting might have ensued. This person was Joe Earnshaw. The mill people observed that now, instead of concealing himself during the day, he was continually about the mill. He had taken lodgings in a cottage which stood on the road-side, commanding the mill-gate. It was ascertained that Joe had paid the woman of the house a visit, and had offered a somewhat extravagant price for the use of her upstairs apartment ; for she boasted that the watchman paid like a gentleman, or else, she said, she wouldn't have taken him in, as she was inconvenienced by the loss of her

room, and the children were frightened at the watchman's appearance.

One day Earnshaw stopped Martha on her way home.

"What do you want with me?" asked the girl.

"Step aside," answered the man, curtly.

"I'll not go very far," answered Martha ;
"you're so queer. I'm flayed (afraid) of you."

"You need not be afraid of me," said the watchman, "I will not hurt *you*." He placed a decided emphasis on the final word.

"Well, I cannot stop long speaking with you, and what is more, lad, I'll not be seen talking wi' nobody i' a dark corner ; so there now. Say your say and ha' done."

A group of mill-girls was not far off, watching. Joe Earnshaw had not been seen talking to a lass before. Martha had no wish to become a butt for their jokes.

“Let go,” she said sharply, “I’m bouned home.”

He held her arm firmly so that she could not stir.

“No,” he said; “not till you have answered me.”

“I will not speak to you except here, i’ the middle of t’ street.”

“Why not?”

“I tell you, lad, I’m flayed o’ you.”

“I tell you, I will not hurt you. Now come with me yonder. I cannot say what I want here.”

“Well, I will go with you to the railway bridge, where no one can hear, but any one may see.”

“Come then.”

He drew her with him. Martha heard the girls laughing, and her colour rose. If she had not promised, she would have wrenched her arm from his grasp and

have run away. She called to the girls to wait for her; she would be with them directly.

When she reached the centre of the bridge which carried the road over the Lancashire and Yorkshire line, close above the station, she resolutely planted her feet against the causeway, and said:

“Joe, I’ll not go an inch further. What do you want?”

He relaxed his hold of her, and turning towards her, leaned his elbow on the parapet, and eyed her strangely.

“I wish tha’d keep thy glances to thy sen,” said Martha; “I’d thank thee to be sharp about speaking, and ha’ done wi’ staring.”

“Martha, where’s Annis Greenwell?”

“Eh! Is that what thour’t driving at?”

“Where’s Annis Greenwell?”

“That’s no concern o’ thine, Joe.”

"I will know," he growled, between his teeth. "Tell me at once."

"Nay! I cannot."

"You will not, you mean to say."

"I'd like to know what it matters to thee, lad, where our Annis is. I reckon it don't concern nobody but me and father and mother——"

"And Hugh Arkwright," he threw in with a roar.

"Ay," she answered, frankly; "and Hugh Arkwright, in course, because he's axed her to be his wife, thou knows."

Flashes of lurid fire shot through the gloomy eyes of the watchman. Martha shrank from him, saying:

"Joe, I reckon thour't a bit mad."

"I'm altogether mad," he howled. "Tell me, I say, where is Annis Greenwell?"

His tone, his look, the frightful passion which worked in his muscles and

features startled Martha, and she answered harshly :

“ I do not know.”

“ Find out and tell me.”

“ I cannot.”

“ Ask your mother.”

“ She does not know where Annis is.”

“ Ask your father.”

“ He does not know, neither.”

“ Then who does ?”

“ There is no but one i' all Sowden as knows.”

“ Who is that ?”

“ Nay ! I will not tell.”

Earnshaw leaned over the parapet. The platform of Sowden Station extended to the bridge, against which was erected the signal post, and the chimney of the little office of the clerk of the luggage. The platform was perfectly visible from the railway bridge. The watchman snorted, pointed to a figure

waiting for the train, in front of the ticket office, turned his blazing eyes on Martha with a mingled air of rage and triumph.

“There,” he hissed. “He.”

The girl ran her eye in the direction indicated, and observed Hugh.

“No,” she said, calmly; “Hugh Arkwright does not know where she is.” Then she slipped away, ran along the road towards Sowden, and rejoined her companions.

“Eh, lass! thas’t gotten a rare sweetheart!” was the mocking cry of one.

“What did he want wi’ thee?” asked another.

“Who ever’d ha’ thowt o’ Joe and thee bein’ thick!” from a third.

Martha shrugged her shoulders and smiled.

“Poor lad,” she said, “he’s about ravin’ mad.”

“What did he say, lass?”

“He’d some long nomine, but I gave no heed to ’t. He’s daft.”

Hugh had been annoyed with being so constantly watched by Earnshaw, and he had alluded to it in conversation with his uncle the day before. He had said to Mr. Arkwright, “I cannot see how you can retain that extraordinary man called Earnshaw as your night-watch. He seems to me mad.”

To which his uncle had replied, “There is a great deal of madness in this world. If we cleared all cracky people out we should depopulate it.”

And Hugh had quoted Horace :—

“*Nimirum insanus paucis videatur, eo quod
Maxima pars hominum morbo jactatur eodem.*”

Whereat his uncle had laughed without in the least understanding the passage, but imagining that a joke lay concealed beneath it.

“My boy, it is rather rich your crying out against that unfortunate man, when you have exhibited the strongest symptoms of insanity of any man in Sowden.”

“How so?”

“By your romantic and absurd attachment.”

“On that point,” Hugh had answered, reddening, “I am in my right senses. But I do think your watchman is mad. He dogs me everywhere, watches me when I go to the mill, and watches me leaving it.”

“Psh!” his uncle had said, “a cat may look at a king.”

And now as Hugh stood on the platform, he saw Earnshaw with his face muffled in a comforter, and his cap drawn over his eyes, run down the flight of steps from the roadway to the station, and take his stand close to him, leaning against the wall of the booking office. Hugh moved to the further end

of the platform. The watchman followed him. He paced up and down. The night-watch paced after him, never removing his eye from him. Hugh was irritated; he turned sharply on him, and asked;

“Do you want me?”

“No.”

“Then I will trouble you not to follow me everywhere.” And he walked under the roof of the shed, and sat down on the bench, near a pile of boxes.

The watchman came after him. Suddenly he stopped. “Hst!” he said, fixing his eye on a trunk covered with mottled purple paper, with two black tape handles nailed to the extremities. Earnshaw stooped, removed a hamper which was upon it, and read the address:—

“MISS FURNESS,
Minster Yard,
York.”

Then he chuckled ; replaced the hamper, and seated himself on the bench beside Hugh.

At this moment the glass booking-office window opened noisily, and the young man, starting from his place, in Earnshaw's hearing, took a return ticket to Bradford. The watchman remained on his seat, laughing to himself with low gurgling gulps, and did not move from it till the train came up, and Hugh had taken his seat near the door, when he rose, strode across the platform, took off his hat, and thrusting his horrible face in at the window, so as almost to touch Hugh, shouted :

“ Do you think I don't know where you've hidden her ? I do.”

Yes ; the secret was now known to two persons : the vicar and the watchman.

Mr. Furness had made John Rhodes send up Annis's box packed to the parsonage, where he had directed it to his sister, not to

Annis, and had sent it down by the railway van to the station, where it was waiting to be forwarded on the arrival of the train for Normanton. Earnshaw, from having lodged in the Greenwells' house, recognized the box at once, and by looking at the address on it, had ascertained where Annis was concealed.

CHAPTER V.

HUGH was engaged on business in Bradford during the afternoon, and it was dusk when he came to the station, but not dark enough for the gas to be lighted. The platform is long. He was early, and had a quarter of an hour to wait.

Two mill-women, in dirty gowns, with grey shawls over their heads, were wrangling and abusing one another on the platform. Their faces were worn and haggard; one, if not both, had been drinking. The subject of their quarrel was not very clear, but their mutual animosity was sufficiently apparent. The language they used was not choice, nor was it delivered in low tones.

One of the porters made an ineffectual attempt to expel the women, but beat a precipitate retreat when he found himself the object of attack from both.

“Thou’rt a owd cat!” yelled one.

“It’s thee as has t’ claws,” retorted the other.

“Thou can brazen it out right grand.”

“It’s thee is as bowld as a bad lass.”

“Say that again!”

“Ay, I’ll say’t and never fear.”

“Mucky-fa-ace!”

“Foul-mouth!”

“Now then! now then!” from the station-master, in a voice of authority. “No squabbling here.”

The women started apart, and the officer drove one to each extremity of the platform.

“Keep order here,” he said, “or I’ll turn you out.” Such scenes were not uncommon.

They were quiet for a while, being some

hundred yards apart. The station-master was satisfied, and retired to his private apartment. Presently the two females began to walk up and down the platform, in opposite directions.

The first time they passed one another, they contented themselves with making grimaces expressive of contempt at one another.

The second time they passed :

“ Mucky-face !” said one.

“ Dirty fingers !” retorted the other.

The third time, one turned and spat at the other. This was distinct proclamation of war *à l'outrance*, and the aggrieved woman, with a scream of rage, sprang at the other with her nails, and a fight began. Shawls were torn off, hair flew about, combs gave way, blood flowed from scratched faces, mingling with oil stains ; the yells and curses of the infuriated creatures became deafening, and attracted all the passengers waiting on

the platform, who seemed, for the most part, to derive entertainment from the scene.

Hugh, who had kept away from them whilst they quarrelled, and had amused himself examining the advertisements that adorned the station walls, came suddenly up, laid a hand on each of the battling women, wrenched them apart, and drew them violently out of the station.

“Keep outside these rails,” he said, “or I’ll give you in charge of the police.”

At the same moment, he noticed a figure leaning against the bars, with his back towards him; this man was thick-set, wore a broad-brimmed hat, a high-collared great-coat, and a blue muffler. Hugh started. The figure and dress belonged to the night-watch. The face he could not see.

Up came the train at this moment, and Hugh left the railing to cross the platform and secure a place.

He had a second-class ticket. He took his seat in a carriage occupied by two men, one old and bald-headed, the other a middle-aged mechanic, with a basket of tools on the seat beside him.

Hugh caught a glimpse, on entering, of a thick-set, muffled person passing behind him into the next compartment of the same carriage.

“Fine evening,” said the bald-headed man.

“Beautiful,” responded Hugh.

“Bit of frost i’ t’ air,” added the mechanic.

“Trade’s slack,” said the old man.

“Middling,” remarked the artizan, in reply.

“Might be worse,” quoth Hugh.

“Do you mind the window being closed?” asked he with the bald head. “I’m subject to stuffiness in the nose if I inhale night air.”

“Not in the least. Let me draw up the glass,” said Hugh, suiting the action to the word.

“Tickets!” from the collector, putting his head in.

“Brighthouse,” said the old man, producing his blue card.

“Change at North Dean. Now, then!” to the mechanic.

The man produced a pass.

“Get out. You’re in the wrong train; next behind.”

So Hugh was left with the old bald-headed man. He rose from his seat and leaned out of the window, to look after the artizan. Then a man on a ladder applied a light to a gas jet in the station, and a yellow blaze fell over the platform, and struck a ghastly, disfigured countenance which peered out of the window of the adjoining compartment.

“ By Jove,” said Hugh, reseating himself as the train moved ; “ the man is Earnshaw.”

“ Did you address an observation to me ?” asked the bald man.

“ No, sir ; I was speaking to myself.”

“ May I trouble you to raise the glass ?”

At North Dean the old gentleman left the carriage, wishing Hugh a very good evening.

“ Will you oblige me by handing me that bag ?—Thank you.—And I think you will find a small portmanteau under the seat.—Much obliged.—Is there an umbrella on the seat ?—Ah ! thanks !—That newspaper, I think, is mine.”

Hugh was alone.

“ Any more going on ?” loudly, from the station-master.

The bell rang. The wheels turned and the train moved, and the gleams from the station lamps changed direction in the carriages. Then a shout, angry or indignant :

“ Now then ! what are you after there ? ”

The door suddenly opened, a man sprang in and took a seat opposite Hugh. By the dull light from the lamp in the carriage, the young man ascertained that his companion was the night-watch.

Hugh calmly contemplated the prospect from the window. The evening sky was cloudless and green. Venus, like a silver lamp, hung in the west, where the moon was just setting, not white and pure, but scarlet, like a glowing furnace. A soft light still lingered over the hills above Riponden, but the vale was steeped in purple black. A white mist hung along the bottom, following the courses of the Rye burn and Calder. Little whiffs of foggy air rushed in at the window, which Hugh had lowered, but, for the most part, the mist lay so low that the line was above it.

Sowerby was lighted up. The factories

presented lines of illuminated windows, showing that work was not slack there, for the mills were running by night as well as by day. The river caught and reflected them where the railway bridge spanned the water, and the draught descending the valley swept the fog away.

From a church on the hill-side sounded a bell for prayers,—a single bell rung slowly, clinking like a smith's hammer on the anvil.

Hugh was conscious, all the while that he watched the shifting scene from the window, that the eyes of the watchman were fixed upon him. He did not look towards Earnshaw, but resolutely directed his gaze without, yet he felt that those gloomy eyes were riveted on him. Probably, every one is aware when another is observing him. A peculiar, uneasy sensation creeps over one, and constrains him to look at the eyes which are upon him.

The fog became denser, lying white upon the water and meadows. Above it stood black trees, whose roots and trunks were steeped in the vapour, and the upper windows of cottages that had their doors immersed. The train roared over a bridge, past a lamp flashing crimson, then green, and plunged into mist, which suddenly obscured the sky, obliterated Venus, shut off the prospect of the hills, chilled the air, and clogged the lungs of those who inhaled it.

Hugh, leaning against the door, was aware that the handle was not turned, for, in entering the carriage, the watchman had not troubled himself to secure the fastening. Hugh with his hand kept the door closed. He might have put his arm out of the window and turned the handle, but, for some reason for which he did not account to himself, he preferred to leave it as it was. His destination was not far off, and he would

jump out all the more rapidly if the door were unhasped.

A rush of sparks went past the window, and a fume of smoke from the engine entered and pervaded the carriage. The practice of burning coke on the Northern lines has been abandoned, and, in defiance of law, coal is invariably consumed.

The train shot past a barge lying in vapour on the canal, with a little scarlet fire on board, illumining the fog, which dispersed the light, as ground glass spreads that of a lamp. A shadow figure of a barge-boy in the fog, gesticulating at the train, and a muffled shout was audible. The canal was apparently running alongside of the line of rails, so that a stone cast from a window of the carriage would splash into the water.

Crash !

Hugh turned his head.

Earnshaw had shattered the glass of the

carriage-lamp with the handle of his large pocket-knife. He then blew the light out. A whistle, distant, timorous, shrill, waxing shriller, bolder, and approaching nearer every second, answered by that of the engine of the train in which was Hugh, high-pitched, piercing, pealing and thrilling as if agonized with fear, rising in pitch, increasing in volume, jarring with that of the approaching engine; then a roar and throbs of thunder, as the trains passed one another. Suddenly, Hugh felt himself in the grasp of the watchman, whom, in the darkness, he could not distinguish, and hurled against the door. The action was so sudden and unexpected, that the young man was unable to gather up his strength for resistance. He had been caught by the waist, lifted, and dashed backward in a second. He felt the door yield behind him, but he caught at the jambs, and planted his

feet against the step. The violence with which he had been thrown, sent him out of the carriage, and his body swung over the flying road, with its sleepers darting by.

He heard the harsh laugh of the night-watch above the throb and rattle of the wheels and the rush of the departing up-train. He endeavoured to recover his balance, and swing himself into the carriage again.

“Off with you!” bellowed the madman, grasping his arms, and trying to wrench them from the door-jambs.

Hugh clung with desperation. If he let go, he must fall. If he fell——!

The watchman kicked at his feet, where they rested on the ledge of the carriage floor; he thrust one from its place, but it was planted again instantly. Next, he leaped on them, and stamped, yelling with rage and fury.

Then they slipped.

But before they yielded, Hugh caught the window, and clung to that.

He hung to the door, as it swung forward and backward, wide open, clasping the panels with his knees, and his hands about the bar.

Then the maniac looked out at him, and laughed; and, laughing in a gulping jerky manner, opened his great pocket-knife.

It is said of people who hear with difficulty, that in a noise their ears become capable of hearing what in a hush they could not catch. In the roar of a street, they can follow a conversation which would sound as a confused murmur in a chamber.

Something of the same description must have influenced Hugh's hearing, for the click of the opened blade came sharp on his ear, through all the rush and clatter of the train. His peril concentrated his powers of eye. He observed nothing but what con-

cerned his safety. It had been dark in the carriage, it was clearer outside, the white fog caught and entangled in it some of the lingering light. Hugh could not make out the face of Earnshaw, but, partly through his sight, and partly through an undeveloped faculty within, residing in the nerves, he was conscious of his every movement.

He saw and felt him catch at the latticed ventilator over the doorway, and sling himself out, and strike at him with his feet, and, failing to reach him, lay his hand on the window, lean outwards, and stab at his knuckles with the knife.

And then the train whirled past a tuft of furze which had become ignited, either by some sparks from the funnel, or by children in sport, and the flickering light kindled the hideous face which leaned towards him, the eyes glaring with demoniacal hate, the flesh scarlet, blotched, seamed; the glittering,

white teeth exposed, the arm uplifted with the knife to stab again.

The first blow had missed. Before the second fell, Hugh caught at the iron handle which is affixed to each carriage, and set his foot on the wooden rail which projects above the wheels. With a little caution, he might now proceed the whole length of the carriage, and find a compartment where he might be safe.

He looked before him.

He was disappointed. The compartment he had been in was the first of the carriage.

Earnshaw seemed to have detected his intention and subsequent disappointment, for Hugh heard the wild mocking, maniacal laugh again.

The handle could be reached from the window.

Earnshaw leaned out, and made a downward slice at the fingers which grasped the

iron. Hugh felt a cut, and then a gush of blood. No tendon had been severed, for his hold remained as firm as ever. The jolting of the wheels over the sleepers had prevented the watchman making as effectual a stroke as he had intended.

With his disengaged hand, Hugh grasped that of the madman which held the knife above the wrist, and swung it against the handle and crushed it upon the iron, till the weapon slid from its grasp and was lost.

Then he let go.

Howling with rage and pain, Earnshaw stepped deliberately down to the rail on which Hugh stood.

The young man felt confident of escape. The speed of the engine was slackening. Through the fog he saw the light of Sowden station, still distant, but becoming momentarily nearer. He heard the bell ringing on the platform, for passengers to prepare to

take their seats. He had but to retain his position for three minutes, and he would be safe.

The break was put on. He felt the jerk and quiver.

Earnshaw also saw that in a little while his enemy would be beyond his reach.

“I’ll have you, yet !” he roared.

Then he made a leap, caught Hugh, wrenched his hand from the hold, his feet from that on which they were stayed. For a throb of the pulse they were grappling in the air, then they struck the ground, rolled, still grappling, one falling over the other, and plunged into the ice-cold water of the canal. They went down together, and touched mud.

They rose apart. .

“Halloo, there !”

They were close to a barge, and the man on it had seen the fall, and now shouted.

“Help!” cried Hugh; and he and Earnshaw struck out.

The watchman was the first to reach the side. He did not climb into the boat, but waited, clinging to the gunwale, and turning his face towards Hugh.

“Here, lad! up wi’ thee,” said the boatman.

Earnshaw made no answer.

“Come; one at a time,” he said again. “Tha don’t seem ower fain to get out o’ t’ water.”

Then Hugh touched the side, the barge-man knelt in the heavily-laden boat and put forth his hand to assist the young man. The watchman raised himself, turned, and deliberately kicked Hugh in the chest.

And the young man sank.

Then, after a prolonged laugh, Earnshaw loosed his hold, and vanished.

CHAPTER VI.

"FIVE foot seven and a half," said Mrs. Doldrums; "I think, Sally, that we have one as 'll suit. May be must screw up his legs a bit, but it 'll do."

The stout lady was applying a tape to the body of Hugh Arkwright, as he lay on a bed in her house.

"That's two yards all but four and a half," said Sally.

"Mother, mother!" cried Miss Doldrums; "he is not dead yet!"

"Sally," ordered the stout lady, "bring the bigger-sized coffins down, will you."

Hugh was not dead.

When Earnshaw kicked him in the chest

he sank, but the boatman caught him by the hair before he went to the bottom, otherwise he would not have risen to the surface till decomposition had set in.

The bargeman had at once carried him to the nearest house, which was that belonging to the Doldrums' family, the garden of which extended to the water's edge. Having deposited his load there, the man had gone in quest of a doctor.

"Sally," said Mrs. Doldrums, "fetch a big book, and put it on his stomach. Yonder is one as 'll do. 'Pinkerton's Geography.' Clap it on his belly, lass!"

Sally, the venerable confidential servant, obeyed.

"Clap on the other volume," added Mrs. Doldrums.

This was done with alacrity.

"Now, Sally, just you get a straddle on them, and sit you down on the books for

about half an hour, and I fancy you'll squeeze all the water out of his lungs."

"Mother! for heaven's sake, don't. Sally, keep off!" cried Laura.

"My dear," said Mrs. Doldrum, "it's the way corpses are plumped."

"Mother!"

"Ay. Your dear father was plumped with that Pinkerton's Geography, and Sally a-straddle on top of it. Wasn't it so, Sally?"

"Sure enough, mam."

"I told you so, Laura. Your father was a terrible sufferer, and a man can't suffer and keep his flesh. It is not reasonable that he should. No one can do two things at the same time. Ah! Doldrums' groans were dreadful, were they not, Sally?"

"They were, missis."

"He fell away shocking towards his end, Laura. We fed him up with chicken-broth,

and beef-tea, and calf's-foot jelly; but we might as lief have put the bellows to his mouth. And no man can live on air, Laura, it isn't to be expected; so he lost flesh and shrunk away till I was quite ashamed to let the corpse be seen. I fair blushed to the roots of my hair when the undertakers came to measure him; he looked skin and bone, as if he'd been famished. So I said to Sally,—Sally, whatever shall we do, that Doldrums may be a credit to us? And Sally proposed we should plump him; and we did so, always hoping as I did to others I may be done by."

"He looked beautiful, missis, when his face were puffed out," said the servant.

"Sally," said the stout lady, "loosen the young man's collar, and take off his cravat."

"Yes, mam."

"Undo the buttons of his waistcoat, and

expose his bosom, so as to give play to the lungs."

"Lor, mam! what's this?"

"A red cotton handkerchief," exclaimed Mrs. Doldrums. "How odd."

"It's like one them mill lasses wear on their heads," observed Sally.

"I see it all!" cried Laura, with enthusiasm. "Good, dear fellow!"

"My love!" exclaimed the stout mother staring at her daughter.

"It is a memorial of his poor little vanished girl," said Laura.

"Now, Sally," ordered Mrs. Doldrums, "put the third Pinkerton on, and then up with you, and get a-straddle."

Hugh sat up, opened his eyes, and looked round.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the fat lady.

Laura, who had been in distress and terror whilst he lay motionless on the bed, now

flew to him, with a cry of joy, and clasping his hand, exclaimed with earnest sympathy :

“ You are not dead ! oh, say you are not dead ! ”

It was some minutes, however, before Hugh was sufficiently recovered to give her the requisite assurance.

And when the colour returned to his cheek, and he spoke, the good-natured and lively girl danced with delight.

“ What can I bring you ? Oh, only tell me ! ”

“ I think,” Hugh answered, faintly, “ I should like my trousers ! ”

“ Why bless my soul ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Doldrums, “ he thinks he’s waking of a morning. I say, young man ! ” in a loud tone into Hugh’s ear.

“ Eh ! ” with a dim look, for consciousness had only partially returned.

“ You are dressed, I tell you. You are not

in bed, though you're on it. Do you know where you have been?"

"No."

"You've come from the bottom of the canal, and you're full of water."

At this moment the surgeon arrived. He at once silenced the women, and cleared the room. He had some difficulty in picking his way among the coffins.

"What are all these for?" he asked, with amazement.

"Oh, they belong to missis," replied Sally; "she thought one of 'em might come in useful."

"And this?" asked the surgeon, taking a long white linen vestment in his fingers.

"That's missis's shroud; she thought she'd be so good as lend it to the young gentleman."

"And, pray, for what purpose are these huge volumes on the bed?"

“Lor, sir! missis and I was boune to plum him.”

“Remove the books at once.”

The medical man spoke with authority and decision. Sally obeyed in trepidation.

“Now, away with the shroud!”

“Missis is so considerate——,” she began, but was at once cut short by a stamp of the foot, and peremptory “Off!”

The shroud was accordingly folded up, and replaced in its usual drawer.

“Remove these coffins immediately.”

Sally shoved one under the bed, and shouldered another.

“Now, let us see to the patient.”

Laura and her mother remained outside, in anxiety.

“Oh, mother! if he were to die!” moaned the girl.

“If he were to die, my dear,” said the old lady, turning towards her, slowly, “why

I hope we should be able to make a nice corpse of him, such as would do us credit."

"How can you talk so, mother?" Laura said, piteously.

"And then," pursued Mrs. Doldrums, "one of the smaller coffins would come in handy."

"I do hope he will get well."

"Of course ; but it would be a pity, too."

"Mother !"

"I say, Laura, it's a pity to have them coffins unused ; they cost some money, which might for all the good they have done, have been cast into the river."

"Why did you have them, then?" she asked, impatiently.

"Because I've fattened out, and overlapped 'em. One after another's gotten too small. Never mind. I'll keep apples in them."

The door opened, and the surgeon came out.

“Well?” Laura asked, with uplifted hands, and fluttering colour in her cheeks.

“He must have a good sleep to-night, and I hope he will be all right to-morrow.”

“Thank heaven!”

“Sally, put the winter apples in one of the coffins, and the preserving pears in the other.”

After a pause, during which the old lady gathered up her breath, she asked :

“And pray, doctor, what about his victuals? And, if you please, what is he to drink?”

“Give him a stiff glass of brandy and water.”

“Would rum do as well?”

“Yes.”

“Or whisky?”

“Yes.”

“Or oil of peppermint, which is very comforting? I have all four.”

“Then the brandy, please.”

“And what is he to eat?”

“Oh, anything.”

“Will a mutton chop do, think you?”

“Admirably.”

“Or a beefsteak?”

“Just as well.”

“What do you say to a veal cutlet and tomato sauce, Mr. Jumbold?”

“Anything he takes a fancy to, madam.”

Then, after a little preliminary meditation, Mrs. Doldrums inquired, with hesitation :

“When my husband was ill, you see, it was wind with him, and we gave him a deal of charcoal biscuits. They say charcoal absorbs the wind, but I can’t say we found it so. However, as they were supposed to do good, I’ve been thinking that perhaps some sponge cake would be nice and suitable for Mr. Hugh Arkwright. It might sop up

the water, you know. What is your opinion, doctor?"

"Oh, certainly; give him sponge cake, if he likes it."

Reassured by finding her suggestion accepted, she ventured on another, with more confidence.

"I've thought a couple of volumes of 'Pinkerton's Geography' clapped on his stomach, and Sally a-straddle——"

"On no account," interrupted the surgeon; "I could not answer for the consequences."

Mrs. Doldrums mused.

"I see," she said, meditatively. "It might send the fluid into his head, and result in water on the brain."

"It might lead to Sally and 'Pinkerton' being pitched out of the window," said the surgeon.

The next to arrive was Mrs. Arkwright, pouring forth a torrent of German, thinly

diluted with English. The report had reached her that her nephew was dead, and dressing, or being dressed, for his funeral. This report had been brought her by Mrs. Jumbold, who had heard the account of the bargeman, when he came in quest of her husband.

When Mrs. Jumbold called, Mr. Arkwright was out, his wife did not exactly know where, so the little lady left a message for him to come on to the Doldrums' mansion immediately on his arrival, as something had happened to Hugh. Sarah Anne, awaiting her master's return, with the message in her keeping, formed her own opinion of the cause of the catastrophe. Hugh had committed suicide on finding that his little girl was taken from him, so Sarah Anne opined ; and, consequently, on the arrival of her master, she conveyed the message in this somewhat altered form :

“ Oh, please sir, Mr. Hugh’s gone and done it.”

“ Gone and done what ?”

“ Drowned hissen, all about that lass Annis.”

“ Fiddlesticks !”

“ It’s ower true,” said the girl, sobbing. “ And missis be gone off wi’ two pennies i’ her pocket to put on his eyes and keep t’ lids shut.”

“ Where is he ?” asked Mr. Arkwright, in great alarm.

“ Mrs. Doldrums has t’ corpse,” between the sobs, “ and Miss Laura’s been a washing it wi’ t’ mop.”

“ Is your mistress there now ?”

“ Ay, sir, wi’ them two pennies. Mrs. Jumbold came and fetched her away. Eh ! poor lad, poor lad !”

“ Does the information come from Mrs. Jumbold only ?”

“Yes, sir ; she came over at once when t’ doctor were sent for ?”

“And she left the message that I was to follow, I suppose ?”

“Ay, sir, she did ; and you was to send to t’ undertaker.”

Mrs. Jumbold on her way home called in Kirkgate, at Mrs. Rhodes’ shop, to buy some ribbon.

“I suppose you’ve heard ?” said the doctor’s wife.

“No, mam ; what ?”

“Shocking ; isn’t it ?”

“What, mam ?”

“Mr. Hugh Arkwright’s decease.”

“Decease !” With a stare, and blank face.

“Yes, Mrs. Rhodes. Your niece, or cousin—which is it ?—Annis Greenwell, may be relieved from apprehension of pursuit. Her lover has perished miserably in the canal.”

“You don’t mean to say so ?”

"It is quite true."

"I've always thought," said Mrs. Jumbold, thrusting her nose forward, "that Annis Greenwell disappeared because, you know, she had expectations of—you understand."

Mrs. Rhodes stood still, aghast.

"And of course she would have come down on Mr. Hugh Arkwright for its support."

"Its support!" echoed Mrs. Rhodes.

"But now she can't. You can't come down on a corpse, you know. I put it to you as a woman, can you?"

"What for?"

"When a young woman goes into hiding for a bit, we all know what that means;" the doctor's wife pursued, "of course it is generally accepted that there were reasons which made it advisable for Annis Greenwell to retire into privacy a while. Now her lover is dead, drowned mysteriously, I can't

say how, and so the expenses of its support will fall on her alone—or, more probably, on you.”

“Mr. Hugh Arkwright dead!” gasped Sarah Rhodes.

“And lying in Mrs. Doldrums’ house,” added Mrs. Jumbold. “How he came by his death I won’t say, but there are suspicions—ahem!” and winking and nodding her head, she left the shop.

Mrs. Rhodes put on her bonnet in the back parlour. Martha and Susan were there. The woman fixed the former with her eye, and said :

“This comes o’ church-going.”

“What, mother?”

“Yond Hugh Arkwright is dead.”

“Dead!”

“Drowned, and lying a corpse at Mrs. Doldrums’ house. So much for church-going.” Then she hurried into the street.

At a corner near the apothecary's shop was the bargeman who had rescued Hugh, dilating on his adventure to an admiring audience.

"Thou sees, lad, if I hadn't a gotten hold on him at t' right moment, he'd a never comed up no more. As for t'other on 'em——"

"What other?" asked Mrs. Rhodes, stopping.

"The man, missus, as were with him."

"Were there two, then?"

"Ay, I reckon, they seemed as if they'd been a quarrelling, and had jumped i' one another's arms, fighting like owt, into t' canal."

"Who was the other?" asked the woman.

"Nay, lass, I cannot tell."

"Do you think he might ha' been a policeman?"

"He might ha' been, for aught I know to t' contrary."

“Yes,” said Mrs. Rhodes, “he must have been a policeman, and now I see the whole case clear.”

“You do !”

“Ay, I do. Our Annis has been murdered.”

“Never !” from three or four.

“Ay, but she has. Murdered by Hugh Arkwright ; and yond policeman was boune to take him up on t’ charge of murder, but he jumped into t’ canal to be shut of him.”

“It can never be.”

“Eh ! but it can. Why, lads, it is as clear as day. Hugh Arkwright had rather drown hissen than be ta’en up by a peeler, and have the shame of being tried in court, and of being sent to prison, and then of being hanged in front of Wakefield gaol. When he saw that he must be ta’en, he threw hissen into t’ river. I see the whole affair.”

“And where’s your Annis ?” asked a man.

“Nay! how’m I to know? Maybe he’s cast her, with clock-weights round her neck, into the river; maybe he’s cut her throat wi’ a jack-knife, and buried her in some dark wood. Maybe he’s hacked her blessed limbs one from t’other wi’ a meat-chopper, and then burnt ’em to ashes i’ a kiln. Dost thou think he’d tell me how he’s done it? That’s likely! eh! It is a wicked world!”

Mr. Furness was writing letters that evening, with his spectacles on his nose, at his little side-table, when his housekeeper came in, with pale face, and uplifted hands.

“Lord, sir! it’s awful!”

“What is the matter, Mary?”

“Matter, sir! enough to make us think the world is at an end. It’s awful, master.”

“Another aurora borealis?” asked the vicar, remembering that the last exhibition of the northern lights had called forth a

similar expression of belief that the term of the world's duration was expired.

“No, sir ; but poor Hugh Arkwright and Annis Greenwell.”

“What of them?” he inquired sharply, and with a start.

“They’ve been dredged up from the bottom of the canal, sir, tied together with a bit of rope—dead, in one another’s arms. Ain’t it awful, sir, awful!”

“Mary, this cannot be true.”

“And they say,” continued Mary, “that a family of eels had made a nest in her head, and there was a lot of frog-spawn in hisn.”

When Mrs. Arkwright arrived at Dol-drums Lodge, Hugh was sufficiently recovered to come down stairs and talk and eat. Of the circumstances attending his accident he could or would only give a con-

fused account, and was glad to acquiesce in Laura's arrangement that he should not be asked about it till he was quite well.

"If you wouldn't mind," said Mrs. Doldrums, "I think, Mr. Hugh, we might get the water out of you in a simple and effectual manner."

"I shall be much relieved if you could."

"Then you will perhaps allow me to have you stuck up against the wall, with your legs in the air, and your head downward. Thus the water will all trickle out, and you needn't mind for the carpet, as it's only an old one."

"I should prefer digesting it," said Hugh.

"Or you might swallow a packet of blotting paper," pursued Mrs. Doldrums; "and then with a dose of ipecacuanha get rid of it when it had sopped the water up."

"Don't you think, mamma, that the

sponge cake would be a more agreeable remedy?" asked Laura, intercedingly.

"Perhaps it would, and then there'd be no need of the ipecacuanha. I'll send Sally for some cakes."

"I should infinitely prefer a mutton chop," said Hugh.

When his uncle arrived in a cab, he found him engaged in discussing a mutton chop, and drinking hot brandy and water.

"Well!" said Mr. Arkwright, "doing pretty well for a dead man."

A rap at the door.

The vicar arrived with anxious inquiries.

"Oh!" as he entered the room. "The deceased looks hearty; and the frog-spawn turns out to be mashed potatoes."

Presently a ring at the bell.

Then some words in the hall.

A tap at the door. Sally looks in and says, "The police inspector!"

"I've thought it my duty to call," said that official, bowing and standing in the doorway, "to make some inquiries touching the very painful circumstance that has occurred."

"Quite so," from Mr. Arkwright.

"I think it would be advisable that I should inspect the corpse, and see if there be anything about it which might help lead to the detection of the person or persons implicated in this most dreadful crime."

"You wouldn't object, now," said Mr. Arkwright, "to drink the corpse's health, I suppose."

"Certainly not, sir," replied the inspector ; "though I may observe, sir, that such a proceeding would be unusual—not the drinking an ealth, sir, but the drinking an ealth to a corpse."

"Nor would you feel a repugnance to

having the glass mixed for you by the corpse."

"It would be unusual, sir—very. Not, understand me, the having a glass mixed ; but I allude to the mixer."

"I suppose you would have no aversion to having your good health drunk by the corpse?"

"Most unusual, sir. Not, I mean, that my ealth should be copiously and enthusiastically drunk, but I refer to the drinker. May I ask where I shall find the defunct?"

"In this room."

"Rather unusual, is it not?—in the presence of company, and company at supper, and supper of a convivial description."

The inspector looked round the room in expectation of seeing the body.

"Gentlemen and ladies," he said, "where may it be?"

“Here,” answered Mr. Arkwright, pointing to Hugh. “At the present moment engaged in preparing for you a stiff glass of whiskey and water.”

Then was heard an altercation at the front door. The cabman had looked in, and was inquiring of Sally whether he was expected to convey the deceased, because he would prefer not to do so; his vehicle was not calculated to serve the purpose of a hearse. The conveyance of a corpse, he urged, might give a bad name to his fly; the body might impart an odour to the cushions which it would be difficult to remove; and he averred that his cab was not licensed to carry dead people, but, as he expressed it, “them as was wick.”

“Come,” said Mr. Arkwright, “I think, Gretchen, we had better be off. I suppose we must leave Hugh in your care, Mrs. Doldrums, for this night, but we

shall transport him to his office duties on Monday.”

“I am sufficiently recovered to go with you, sir,” said Hugh.

“I will not allow it,” exclaimed Mrs. Doldrums. “Here you stay. I have given orders for your room to be got ready.”

“But I am not provided with the requisites,” said the young man smiling.

“We can send for them,” Mrs. Arkwright assured him.

“Oh,” said Mrs. Doldrums, “never bother about that, my dear. There is my poor husband’s nightshirt—who is now mouldering in his grave—and comb and brush, and there’s the lather-brush and razor that were used to shave him with, before they put him in his coffin. You can have them and welcome; they have not been used since then, so I know the razor must

be sharp. Besides, razors, they say, always improve by keeping."

"Yes, you must stay," Mr. Arkwright ordered, "and we will see what the doctor says of you to-morrow, before you stir out of the house."

"Of course you will stay," Laura urged; "we cannot afford to part with you yet."

"Thank you," said Hugh; then to his uncle: "May I accompany you to the front door without running some frightful risk?" And he led his aunt into the hall.

As the front door opened, the light from the gas chandelier in the hall fell over the figure of a girl with a shawl round her head, standing on the doorstep. Her cheeks were glistening with tears.

"Martha!" exclaimed Hugh. "My dear girl, what brought you here?"

"Oh, sir!" she answered, "I heard you were dead. It is not true. I am so thank-

ful. I could not rest till I knew all, and I was afraid to ask."

She clasped his hand and wrung it, in hearty Yorkshire style. "I was sick with fear," she said; and then in an undertone, that Hugh alone could hear, she added, "For our poor Annis's sake."

END OF VOL. II.



